

GAZETTE DES BEAUX-ARTS

DECEMBER 1942



C O N T E N T S

A SECOND RETABLE BY JAN JOEST IN SPAIN, BY CHANDLER R. POST.
‡ TWO PROVENCAL XV CENTURY PAINTERS REVIVED (II) THE "MASTER
OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINXE?), BY CHARLES STERLING. ‡ THE
LOUVRE CORONATION AND THE EARLY PHASE OF FRA ANGELICO'S ART,
BY CURT GLASER. ‡ A TITIAN PROBLEM: *THE SEVEN ACTS OF MERCY*,
BY FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR. ‡ "L'AFFICHE MODERNE", A REVIVAL
OF POSTER ART AFTER 1880, BY ROBERT J. GOLDWATER. ‡ A SELF-POR-
TRAIT BY PAUL GAUGUIN FROM THE CHESTER DALE COLLECTION, BY
KATRINA VAN HOOK. ‡ BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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A Note to the Binder: (The first page of this issue should be bound as the first page of the October [909th] issue, Volume XXII, 1942.) Volume XXII consists of the three issues published in 1942. Each volume of the GAZETTE is normally made up of six issues. This procedure will be followed during the year 1943.



A SECOND RETABLE BY JAN JOEST IN SPAIN

SINCE a proper degree of appreciation has not, as Friedländer¹ intimates, been generally meted out to one of the most gifted exponents of the early Renaissance in the Low Countries, Jan Joest, and since so few of his productions have survived or at least been recognized, the emergence of another work of his from obscurity acquires added significance. The work in question, in the church of San Lesmes at Burgos, even comprises as many as four beautifully preserved panels, which, so far as my knowledge goes, have never before been attributed to him or indeed received more than the casual mention of a few vague words in Guides to the city². Spain, however, and particularly Burgos and its province would be natural hunting grounds for his paintings, since he has long been recognized³ as the author of the extant altarpiece that was ordered at Brussels to adorn the *trascoro* of the cathedral at near-lying Palencia.

1. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Die altniederländische Malerei*, IX, Berlin, 1931, pp. 9-19.

2. The nearest approximation to anything like a definite statement is found in: ANTONIO BUITRAGO Y ROMERO, *Guía general de Burgos*, Madrid, 1876, p. 296, where they are described as "cuatro tablas flamencas de bellísimo colorido."

3. See, *inter alia*, my *History of Spanish Painting*, IV, pp. 31-32.

The remains of a *Retable of St. Bartholomew*, the four panels in San Lesmes are now incongruously set up over an altar dedicated to Nuestra Señora de los Dolores at the left of the nave in the church. To their intrinsic importance as works of art is united the iconographical interest that two of them incorporate the demoniacal legend about the Apostle's infancy which was so favorite a theme in Spanish painting but so rarely represented elsewhere⁴. In the first compartment (fig. 1) an impish changeling is seen peering forth from Bartholomew's cradle at the mother's bedside while Satan whisks away the newborn saint in the background. The second panel (fig. 2) reveals the happy ending to the tale, the Jewish priest (vested, in conformity with a frequent, anachronistic practice of artists at this period, as a Christian prelate) finding, instead of the wild beasts that he was pursuing, the infant Bartholomew on the top of a mountain watched over



(Photo-Photo Club)

FIG. 1. — JAN JOEST. — The Substitution of a Devil-Child for the Infant St. Bartholomew. (San Lesmes, Burgos).

by the doe which regularly serves as the nurse in these mediaeval stories of saintly babies stolen by the devil⁵. The pair of compartments in the lower tier depict scenes

4. For the story and its embodiment in the Fine Arts, see: GUY DE Tervarent and BAUDOUIN DE GAIFFIER, *Le diable, voleur d'enfants*, in *Homenatge a Antoni Rubió i Lluch*, Barcelona, 1936, II, pp. 33-58; and my *History of Spanish Painting*, VII, pp. 731-733.

5. Nearly invisible in the photograph from which the illustration is made, the child lies on a rock in the upper left corner of the picture, and it requires a very powerful magnifying glass to distinguish the deer beside him at the left.

of commoner occurrence in cycles from the Apostle's life. In the one at the right (fig. 3) he exorcises the daughter of King Polemius of India, while through apertures in the architectural setting we descry subordinate episodes in the event enacted in smaller scale, at the left the summoning of St. Bartholomew to perform the cure, at



(Photo-Photo Club)

FIG. 2. — JAN JOEST. — The Rescue of the Infant St. Bartholomew. (Sen Lesmes, Burgos).

the centre his refusal of the camels laden with wealth as a reward, and at the right his appearance to the monarch in the royal bed chamber on the day following the miracle. The final member of the series (fig. 4) displays him again in the role of enemy of demons in which the Middle Ages had chiefly conceived him. In the temple of the heathen god Astaroth, whose statue is cracking apart, he delivers a man possessed and is correspondingly about to restore to sanity a fettered woman seated at the feet of the idol. The apparel of St. Bartholomew in both of the compartments in which he is represented in his maturity is faithfully accommodated, as generally in Spanish iconography, to its description in the *Golden Legend*, "a white

Golden Legend, "a white

mantle, which in every corner hath gems of purple and precious stones therein"⁶.

The authorship of Jan Joest will scarcely need further demonstration than the

6. There has recently been moved from the sacristy to the nave of San Lesmes a fine Flemish panel of the *Crucifixion* which, however, is not a further part of Jan Joest's retable but a work of Ysenbrant; cf: FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, XI, p. 133, No. 162.

illustrations herewith published for anyone who is at all familiar with his types and methods or who will merely thumb over even the limited reproductions of his works included in volume IX of Friedländer's *Die altniederländische Malerei*. For the sake of driving home the justness of the attribution, however, I will point out a few of the more obvious identities. In the midst of a general agreement of the feminine types and costumes throughout the series in San Lesmes with the examples in the master's other creations, the women in the scene of the supposititious child find their exact counterparts in the *Circumcision* of the altarpiece in the church of St. Nicholas at Calcar (fig. 5)⁷. Another such precise analogy exists between the girl waiting her turn to be exorcised in the background of the temple of Astaroth and the Magdalene in the *Entombment* of the retable at Palencia (fig. 6)⁸. The adult St. Bartholomew reiterates a masculine type often employed by Joest and is most nearly duplicated, at Calcar, by the Moses in the representation of the *Raising of the brazen serpent in the wilderness* (fig. 7)⁹ and by the *Pilate passing judgment upon Christ* (fig. 8)¹⁰. The king beholding his daughter freed from a devil



(Photo-Photo Club)

FIG. 3. — JAN JOEST. — St. Bartholomew Delivering the Daughter of King Polemius from a Demon. (San Lesmes, Burgos).

7. Reproduced from: STEPHAN BEISSEL, *Das Leben Jesu Christi von Jan Joest zu Kalkar*, München-Gladbach, 1899.

8. Reproduced from: FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*

9. Reproduced from: STEPHAN BEISSEL, *op. cit.*

10. Reproduced from: FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*

is only a more aged version of the same sort of personage, and he wears a curious woe-begone expression that is highly characteristic of Joest's actors even when there was no cause for depicting them stricken with sorrow, as, at Calcar, in the case of the priest of the *Purification* and the *Saviour conversing with the woman of Samaria*. One of the most convincing identities is provided by the man whom St. Bartholomew heals of demoniac possession. His countenance is of a kind to which the master resorts again and again when he wishes to impart the effect of frantic suffering or excitement. Striking instances emerge in the henchman impelling Our Lord in the Palencia *Via Dolorosa*, the soldier at the upper left in the *Resurrection*



FIG. 4. — JAN JOEST. — St. Bartholomew Exorcising in the Temple of Astaroth. (San Lesmes, Burgos).

of the Calcar altarpiece, and, with still closer parallelism in this altarpiece, the victim of the plague in the right corner beneath Moses raising the brazen serpent and the ruffian with the lantern in the *Betrayal*. In the compartment of the *Discovery of the infant St. Bartholomew on the mountain*, the face of the foremost horseman resembles that of the Apostle at the extreme left in the Calcar *Ascension*, and the youth behind the Jewish priest belongs to a class of Raphaelesque gallants, with jauntily tilted hats, who are constant participators in Joest's narratives. Even the cat and the hound in the two panels relating the story of the saint's birth betray precisely the same kind of shortcomings in the



FIG. 5. — JAN JOEST. — The Circumcision. (Church of St. Nicholas, Calcar).

Jan Joest a plastic and ductile material, in which he expresses the individual's nature, age, and temperament. It undulates in curly locks, silky and carefully combed; it hangs on the brow, shaggy, flocculent, or tight; it flutters outwards, dishevelled and entangled. The ideal type of womanhood is healthy and warm-blooded."

It is highly suggestive that Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, who in 1505, as then bishop of Palencia, ordered the altarpiece for the cathedral of this city while he was at Brussels on a royal mission, subsequently in 1514 was translated to the see of Burgos, which he occupied until his death in 1524. Lacking knowledge of the history of the panels in San Lesmes, we are at liberty to surmise

delineation of animals as the dog in the Calcar representation of *Christ before Pilate*.

A partial quotation of Friedländer's analysis of the master's style will suffice to reveal in the series of San Lesmes the Morellian traits that the German scholar specifies. "The hands are large and eloquent, with long, bony fingers; the distance between nose and mouth is small; the eyes are dark and deeply embedded, often opened only in a small slit and, so to speak, pinched together; the ear is long and pointed toward the bottom . . . The drapery is not at all crumpled but disposed in great, sweeping folds. The hair is for



FIG. 6. — JAN JOEST. — The Entombment. (Cathedral, Palencia).

that the prelate, well content with Jan Joest's achievement for Palencia, bethought himself, in his new dignity at Burgos, of his old friend and honored him with a further commission, the *Retable of St. Bartholomew*. Another possibility would be that he merely proposed the master to some pious donor in his diocese of Burgos. If these guesses have any validity, the retable would be dated between Juan de Fonseca's elevation to the see of Burgos in 1514 and Joest's death in 1519. A later moment than the Palencian altarpiece is implied also by the increased settings of architecture of the Renaissance, which are at least as conspicuous as those in the paintings at Calcar. Friedländer is inclined to believe that the master had already completed the task for Palencia before, in the same year, 1505, the undertaking at Calcar began to demand his attention; and if the contract for the retable of St. Bartholomew was inspired by Juan de Fonseca, it must have been executed consider-

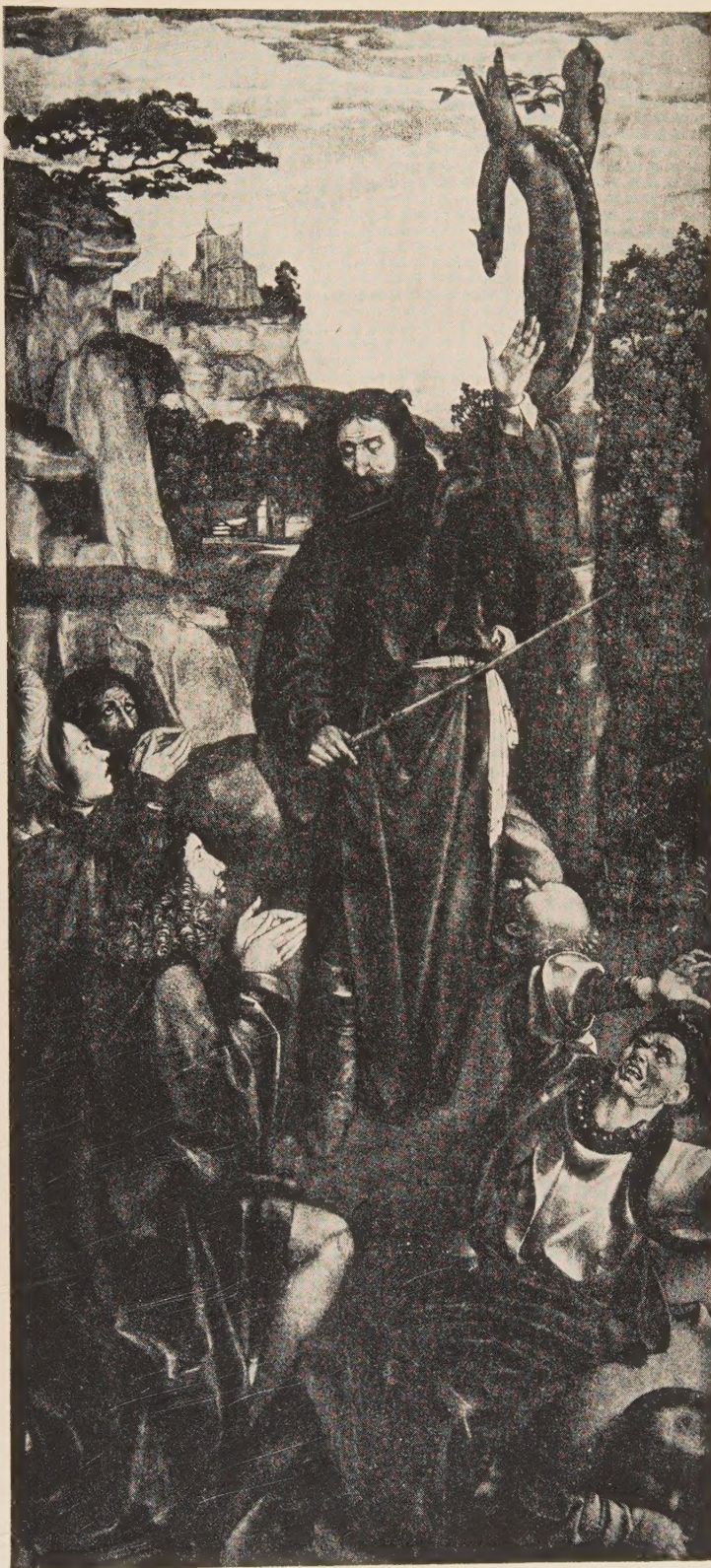


FIG. 7. — JAN JOEST. — The Raising of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness. (Church of St. Nicholas, Calcar).

ably after the artist's activity at Calcar, which seems to have ended in 1508. A slightly more Spanish atmosphere is spread over the retable by the representation of the legend of St. Bartholomew's infancy, which was peculiarly popular in the peninsula, and by the augmented introduction of Mohammedan turbans as headdresses, in comparison with the very few specimens in the works at Palencia and Calcar; but although the ascertained facts and dates of Jan Joest's life in northern Europe¹¹ leave ample intervals for a trip to Spain, it is not necessary to predicate any such journey in order to explain the indigenous factors, which might have been prescribed by his patron at Burgos.



CHANDLER R. POST

FIG. 8. — JAN JOEST. — Christ before Pilate. (Church of St. Nicholas, Calcar).



11. Besides FRIEDLÄNDER's vol. IX, see: the addenda in his vol. XIV, p. 114, and FRITZ WITTE, *Tausend Jahre deutscher Kunst am Rhein*, Berlin, 1932, I, pp. 152, 335, and 337.



TWO XV CENTURY PROVENÇAL PAINTERS REVIVED*

-II-

THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINXE?)

THE second painter of the same generation upon whom it seems possible for us to cast some light is of more considerable talent. He qualifies as the author, until now anonymous, of the four fine panels in the Johnson Collection in Philadelphia, representing *Scenes from the legend of St. Sebastian* (figs. 3-6). Connoisseurs of first rank, Berenson and Hulin de Loo among others, have studied them and rightly recognized their Provençal character. One can enlarge the knowledge of his production and attempt to identify him.

The four *Scenes from the life of St. Sebastian* are of very individual style and high quality. They are worthy of defining the personality of a painter. Provisionally let us call their author the "Master of St. Sebastian".

In his narrative the painter has faithfully followed the text of the Golden Legend¹. The episodes are from the end of the saint's life. In the first panel St. Sebastian appears in rich costume as commander of the first troop of the Emperors Maximian and Diocletian; with the priest Polycarp he undertakes to destroy pagan

* Part one of the study *Two Provençal XV century painters revived*, Nicolas Dipre, appeared in the October 1942 issue. Owing to a misprint, a question mark was omitted after the name of Nicolas Dipre in the caption of fig. 2, p. 15.

1. The iconographic importance of this series is considerable, scenes from the life of Saint Sebastian other than his martyrdom being very rarely preserved in painting. In fact, no one of the books or studies devoted to the iconography of this saint illustrates such scenes (see, for instance, the recent *Saint Sébastien dans l'art* by Victor Kraehling, Paris, 1938).

idols in the magic chamber of the roman prefect Chromatius (fig. 1). Gravely ill, the prefect has called the two Christians in the hope of being healed. In the magic chamber was represented "the entire system of stars which permitted Chromatius to foresee the future". The bronze and marble statuettes, in fact, represent Diana, Mars, Neptune and Venus, corresponding to the moon and planets of these names. The two furnaces have been lighted by Tiburcius, son of Chromatius, to burn the Christians should they fail to heal the prefect; this "most remarkable young man" has a very decided air as he stands near his father's bed. But they have succeeded and an angel announces to the sick man that "the Lord Jesus has restored his health". The elegant silhouette of Tiburtius is definitely of Italian inspiration. The interior, on the other hand, reveals no such character in spite of the Renaissance pilasters. The magnificent red cloak worn by St. Sebastian is clearly Burgundian in its generous movement.

The *Martyrdom of the Saint* follows (fig. 2). He is tied to a tree in the center of the Field of Mars and stands on a stump after the Italian formula to be observed in Pollajuolo (National Gallery, dated 1475) and Botticelli (Kaiser-Frederich Museum, dated 1474). Probably from the same source is the archer in the foreground who adjusts his crossbow with his foot. (Pollajuolo and Giovanni Santi in the Ducal Palace at Urbino). In the background of the "Field of Mars" we note some Gothic towers. The freely painted landscape with its blue hills outlined against a mauvish sky overhung by leaden clouds is of a romantic temperament reminiscent of north Italian painters. But the general composition of this scene is quite Flemish with the archers grouped to one side as in the famous Memling of the Brussels Museum (about 1470); Italians have usually arranged the archers symmetrically.

After the martyrdom, *St. Irene ministers to the Saint* whom she has succeeded in restoring to life (fig. 3). The interior in this scene is Provençal; it has an Italian paneled ceiling but the chimney with curved jambs and no moldings is like that in the Papal Palace at Avignon, and the rose and beige tiles of the floor, without decoration, are common in Provence. The statuette of the Virgin and Child is obviously French.

Finally, the *Death of St. Sebastian* (fig. 4). In the foreground the saint is brutally beaten with rods "until death came" while further back the three executioners throw his body "into a well, to prevent Christians from venerating it as the relic of a martyr". The group of executioners doing the beating is governed by a strict rhythm, the depth of the whole scene results from skillful perspective and the entire composition breathes a solidity and freedom quite Italian. The ruins of the Colosseum and the Arch of Constantine are of the Italian iconographic tradition found, for instance, in Pollajuolo or the *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* from the school of Signorelli, at Citta di Castello. We are struck by their accurate representation which suggests that the painter either traveled to Rome or had at his disposal drawings made

there. The suffering face of the saint and the expressions of the executioners lead us again toward the neurose climate of north Italy which was open to the influences of the upper Rhine and south Germany.

These four panels of equal size are without doubt sections of an altarpiece. They were sold to Mr. Johnson by Agnew and before this transaction, in 1901, Camille Benoit, in an article, reproduced two of them and gave the following footnote²: "The same mixed influences (French and Netherlandish) are found in a work of very inferior level (to that of the Master of St. Giles) but of earlier date: a series of four panels of the legend of St. Sebastian". This is the only phrase which the French art criticism devoted to the pictures.

Hulin de Loo recognized in a *Pietà* which he owns³ (fig. 5), the painter of the four Johnson panels. The comparison is entirely convincing. The same models (the lamenting woman to the right of the Virgin and St. Irene), the same drawing of eyes, mouths, hands, folds, even the foreshortening of faces, are to be marked. There is the same note of pathos. The colour is also similar — cinabar, madder lake, yellow, dark verdigris and a delicate grey. The technique is analogous in that the drawing shows freely beneath the paint.

Now, to the five pictures it is possible to add four others, because all of these characteristics are revealed in them.

1-2. A panel painted on both sides, one a *St. Michael* and the other an *Annunciation*; one of the finest and most enigmatic pictures of the Museum Calvet in Avignon (figs. 6-7).

3. A *Marriage of the Virgin* (fig. 8) in the Brussels Museum which undoubtedly is the pendant to the preceding *Annunciation* because, not only do the dimensions agree, but also the compositions, framed by marble columns with identical capitals.



FIG. 1. — THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINX?). — ST. SEBASTIAN DESTROYING THE IDOLS. (Johnson Collection, Phila.)

2. "Gazette des Beaux-Arts", 1901, pp. 97 and 99.

3. Letter of March 4, 1914, addressed to John G. Johnson.



FIG. 10. — THE MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN. (1500-1510). — THE MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN. (1500-1510). — THE MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN. (1500-1510).

These are two sections of a great altarpiece.

4. An *Adoration of the Child* (*Quem genuit adoravit*) (fig. 9), with a *Figure of a Bishop* painted on the reverse, a small picture somewhat forgotten at the Louve, previously in the Musée de Cluny. As we see only the lower half of the *Bishop* it is obvious that the panel is a section of a wing of an altarpiece which had a great figure of a bishop on the outer side and two superimposed scenes on the inside, the lower one being the *Adoration*.

This group of four pictures gives every indication of one artist. As for the close analogy of style and types we note an identical halo. But do we recognize here the hand of the "Master of St. Sebastian"? One hesitates to assert this because while the similarities are numerous there are also certain differences. The four panels of the Johnson Collection and the

Hulin de Loo *Pietà* are more animated, more dramatic in feeling, free in *facture*, commodious in style. The absence of plain gold haloes would indicate a more advanced, less "primitive" artist. Do such differences suggest two artistic personalities or two successive phases of the same personality? The problem is one of the most fundamental and delicate in the history of art whenever this study must reduce itself to the analysis of style without documents to support it. The instinct of a critic, his experience of the mechanism of the creative imagination, his conjecture of the possibilities of an artist drawn from the appreciation of that artist; manifest features, will finally decide. In my opinion here is but a single painter who has matured, acquired complete freedom of execution and turned toward an art more expressive and dynamic after being subjected to the influence of north Italian painting. This idea is substantiated by its agreement with certain documents from which one would conclude that the "Master of St. Sebastian" could have cooperated with an Italian, born near Turin. A figure such as the young companion of the Virgin (fig. 10), taken from the Brussels picture, does not cede anything in poetic nobility and plastic force to the most beautiful invention of the "Master of St. Sebastian" — to the per-

is still in the church at Briga Marittima, in a region where commissions were frequently given to painters working in Marseilles. The style is equally Provençal: the drawing of the folds is rectilinear and incisive, their lighting is decided and their bulk "cubic". It is almost as if the liquid and supple painting of Flemish origin were brusquely crystalized with this elegant dryness so characteristic of the Provençal manner. As to the date of the artist's activity, it corresponds to the last years of the XV century, judging from costume and general style.

Documents pertaining to painters of Provence mention an artist who satisfies all of these conditions. Josse Lieferinxe, designated in these records as a Picardian painter, was from *Denguiers* in Hainaut, the diocese of Cambrai. This gives assurance that he must have been familiar with Flemish art.

In 1503 he married the daughter of Jean Changenet, a painter who came from Dijon and played a leading role in the artistic life of Avignon toward the end of the XV century, but of whom not a single work has yet been identified. Lieferinxe was, then, in connection with the milieu of Burgundian painters in Provence⁵.

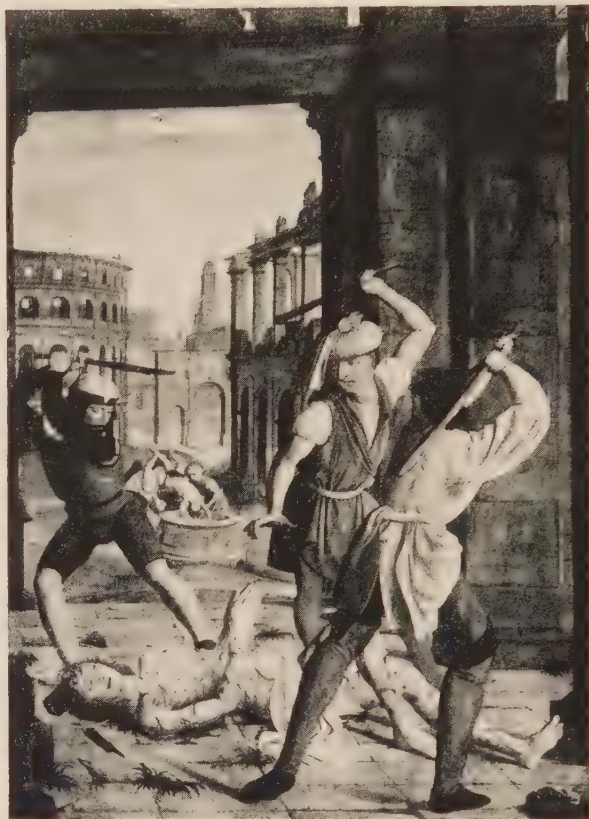


FIG. 4. — THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINXE?). — DEATH OF ST. SEBASTIAN. (Johnson Collection, Philadelphia)

5. It is true that in 1503 Changenet had been dead about nine years. But for Lieferinxe to come from Marseilles to Avignon expressly to marry a girl of thirteen years it is to be supposed that he must have had earlier relations with the father — famous painter, rector of the Confraternity of St. Luke in Avignon and head of a workshop crowded with apprentices and assistants. He could have entered this shop prior to working with Philippon Mauroux in Marseilles. Moreover, the latter, whose Christian name makes one think of Burgundy, could have given him similar training. In a general sense the number of Burgundian painters in Provence toward the end of the century was considerable and their influence must have been very widespread. Here are the names of the principal ones mentioned in the records; they come, whether from Burgundy properly speaking or the adjacent regions, dominated by the Burgundian spirit: Jean Gomet, called *de Langres* (1498); Jean Jaufre, diocese of Lyon (1469-1492); Jean Rollier, diocese of Macon (1498-1534); Jean Rollin, diocese of Lyon (1500); François Sibaud, diocese of Vienna (1492); Armand Tavernier, of Montbrison, diocese of Lyon (1446—died in 1482); Georges Trubert, diocese of Troyes (1469-1492); Etienne Bolet, diocese of Troyes (1485-1535); Jean Guémar, of Die (1496); Antoine Robert, of Pont-de-Vaux, diocese of Lyon (1480); Jean Benvestit, of Valence (1471-1488); Jean Gorrier, of Langres (1438-1499); Philippe Sauceton, of Grignan, diocese of Die (1496); Jean Goma, called *Langue* or *de Lengue*, native of Lyon (1498-1499).

Perhaps he was the pupil of this master. In truth we do not know where he learned his craft before appearing in Marseilles in 1493 as a skilled assistant in the studio of a certain Philippon Mauroux who entrusted to him the complete execution of a quite important altarpiece.

In 1497 Lieferinx emancipated himself from the tutelage of this obscure artist and we find him undertaking a considerable and well paid commission on his own. In Marseilles during the same year he appears as associated with Bernardino Simondi, Piedmontese painter from Venasca, of the diocese of Turin. This connection proves his familiarity with north Italian art.

The object of this collaboration has a direct interest for us. The contract is of July 11, 1497. The priors of the *Confrérie du Luminaire de St. Sébastien* in the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Accoules at Marseilles negotiated with the two artists for a new altarpiece. The painters were to follow the model furnished by them. Background, pillars, moldings and crests with gold (indication of the gold ground restricted to the main panel). In the center of the altarpiece: St. Sebastian, nude and martyred, between St. Anthony and St. Roch. On the eight side panels: Scenes from the life of St. Sebastian ("*in octo parquetis a lateribus dicti retabuli, bene et sufficiente, et cum ipsis bonis coloribus, videlicet, octo ystorias, matirii et vite predicti beati Sebastiani, cum dyadematis (seu) coronis auri; et etiam in aliis locis in quibus erit opus et necesse, ponere aurum in vestimentis imaginum, et in aliis locis, ut erit necessitas, ut dictum est*"). In the predella: a *Pietà* ("*ymaginem beate Marie Pietatis, cum diademati auri*") between a scene of St. Anthony with his little pig and another of St. Roch. The artists undertook in addition "*duos tirans, duos archerios cum arcubus*". On the *superciel*: God the Father. The artists were allowed to remove the altarpiece to their studio but must replace it at their own expense. Price: 300 florins. Time of execution: one year⁶. Now, in March 1498, Simondi died in Aix. The altarpiece was far from completed because, a few weeks later, Lieferinx had to promise to finish it before the approaching Pentacost. It was well advanced or completed in January 1499, the date of receipt for accomplished work.

Could the four scenes from the Legend of St. Sebastian in the Johnson Collection and perhaps the Hulin de Loo *Pietà* come from this altarpiece?

The Johnson pictures could have formed one of the two side panels which, evidently, had four scenes each. It would have been the panel to the right because the scenes from the end of the saint's life are represented; if the four pictures were for a long time framed as one unit it would explain how they resisted separation and came together to Philadelphia. The left panel might therefore have contained such earlier scenes as the martyrdom of the twin brothers Marcellinus and Marcus, the apparition of seven angels, the healing of Zoe, the baptism of Tranquillinus by Poly-

6. Original document published by ALBANES, in "Bulletin Archéologique", 1884, p. 253.



FIG. 5. — THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINXE?). — PIETA (Hulin de Loo Collection, Ghent).

carp. As to the Hulin de Loo *Pietà* it is less certain that it could have been the central portion of the predella because the dimensions are rather large (88 cm. x 1 m. 1 cm.). However, the Johnson panels could have been in single vertical file rather than superimposed by two's as would at first be natural to suppose: such disposition is found in contemporary Provençal altarpieces, done by Antonio Ronzen and the Brea. In this case the total height could well exceed 3 m. 50 cm. counting the *superciel*; a proportion quite able to carry a central predella panel of 88 cm. in height. The altarpieces of the Brea and of Ronzen attained such dimensions. In any case, the *Pietà* seems to be strictly contemporary with the Johnson pictures in spirit and execution.

In the *Martyrdom* and *Death* the composition is more dynamic, it is based on more emphasized diagonals. But the technique of the four panels and the drawing of figures are absolutely alike.

This agrees with what is known about the altarpiece ordered from Lieferinxe

and Simondi in 1497. The more dramatic Italian imagination must have influenced the invention of certain scenes; we know from the contract that the associated artists had established the composition of the altarpiece since they furnished its *modèle*. But the execution was the work of only one artist and it belongs to Lieferinxe alone. Twelve days after the common contract, Simondi signed another contract on his own account for an altarpiece of considerable importance and left it unfinished when he died which suggests a long illness. This most certainly prevented him from working on the St. Sebastian altarpiece. After his death, Lieferinxe had to work for ten months in order to finish the altarpiece, which proves that his was the dominant share in the task.

The collaboration of an Italian makes perfectly clear the mysterious precision of the Roman ruins in a Provençal painting from the end of the XV century. At his death, Simondi bequeathed to Lieferinxe an album of drawings (*pertracturum*). One knows that sketchbooks of this type contained, in addition to all manner of models, drawings made in the course of travel. The most celebrated Roman ruins could have figured there and Lieferinxe would thus have been able to reproduce them in the St. Sebastian altarpiece even after the death of his friend and associate.

The only serious objection to the identification of the Johnson panels with the Lieferinxe-Simondi altarpiece would be the complete absence of gold in the



FIG. 6. — THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINXE?). — ST. MICHAEL. (Calvet Museum, Avignon).



FIG. 7. — THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINXE?). — ANNUNCIATION.
(Calvet Museum, Avignon).

Accoules for the main altarpiece in St. Laurent at Marseilles (Christ and the twelve apostles in the predella). One might ask whether the Johnson panels do not come from the altarpiece of Michalet rather than from the one of Lieferinxe and Simondi. But Michalet, who was also a glass painter, does not seem of sufficient skill to claim an easel painting of the quality shown in the nine pictures by the "Master of St. Sebastian". This one is Michalet's only known commission for an altarpiece and the stipulation that he copy the work of Lieferinxe would pronounce him not able enough for the spontaneous invention displayed by the Johnson panels.

Josse Lieferinxe did not long survive his associate. He died between 1505 and

former. But April 6, 1498, after the death of Simondi which occurred in March of that year, Lieferinxe made another contract for the altarpiece in his own name; as he alone was to do the important work for the same price it is possible that he asked to eliminate the gold. On the other hand, we know from the contract for the *Coronation of the Virgin* by Enguerrand Quarton how freely Provençal artists could interpret the details prescribed⁷.

The altarpiece was greatly appreciated. The year after its completion it was given as a model to the painter Nicolas Michalet, or Michelet, who had to do nine scenes "after the manner" of the altarpiece of Notre-Dame-des-

7. See CHARLES STERLING, *Le Couronnement de la Vierge par Enguerrand Quarton*, Paris, 1939.

1508, more likely toward the later date. He was doubtless still quite young because only fourteen years before, he had been Mauroux's assistant. The youthfulness of Lieferinxe in 1490 to 1500, the years from which the nine pictures of the "Master of St. Sebastian" seem to date, raises a new argument in favor of the identification of these two artists. In a young man one readily understands a rapid transformation of manner, a softening of technique and an enlargement of conception discovered in the *Pietà* and the St. Sebastian panels but lacking in the other pictures, very probably of previous date. This change which corresponds to a quite sudden Italian influence could be accounted for by the contact with Simondi, about 1497.

The existence of a picture by the "Master of St. Sebastian" at Briga Marittima fits perfectly with Lieferinxe's activity in Marseilles.

Thus we have an agreement of facts which advises us to recognize Josse Lieferinxe as the "Master of St. Sebastian".

But we must not forget that the hypothesis, although very plausible, is without direct foundation. The provenance of the Johnson pictures is unknown. They lack the gold prescribed in the St. Sebastian altarpiece. Descriptions of subjects in the contract of 1497 are not precise; the only one offering a detail, that



FIG. 8. — THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINXE?). — MARRIAGE OF THE VIRGIN. (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels).



FIG. 9. — THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINXE?). — ADORATION OF THE CHILD. (Louvre, Paris).

of the two archers drawing their bow, cannot correspond to the *Martyrdom* in which, by a curious coincidence it is two soldiers who draw bows, because this stipulation most likely means two isolated figures added to balance the composition of the altarpiece, especially if its form were very narrow and high. (*Item plus quod ipsi magistri depingere teneantur duos tirans, et in eisdem facere duos archerios cum arcubus.*) And finally, the details of Lieferinx's life do not yield direct proof of a strong Burgundian background which is obvious in the "Master of St. Sebastian". Consequently one can but make a suggestion. The probability, however, is no less than in the case of identifying Simon Marmion as the author of the *St. Bertin Altarpiece* in the Berlin Museum or the Master of Moulins as Jean Perreal; the former hypothesis accepted by everyone, the latter receiving more and more support.

Apart from Josse Lieferinx, the only painter to propose would be Jean Chagnet who came from Burgundy to Avignon and was known from 1485 to 1493, the

date of his death. About 1491 he painted two altarpieces devoted to St. Sebastian for the Dominicans of Avignon and for the Church of St. Praxide in the same city. We know only that these pictures existed because they are mentioned February 8, 1492 in an agreement made by Changenet for another picture, referring to their gold and good colours as models. We have also the final receipt for the Dominican's St. Sebastian, dated March 25, 1494. The main argument in favor of Changnet would be his Burgundian background; on the other hand it would be difficult to explain the presence of Piedmontese influence and such precise Roman ruins in his work.

Whatever the name of the "Master of St. Sebastian" his personality is clearly manifest. The Flemish, Burgundian and Italian influences, although apparent, are merely accessories. The essence of the style stems from Provençal spirit and from French feeling. The form is much less analyzed than the Flemish, the structure of the volumes is emphasized by rare but essential accents. The sharp outlines of panels of material stiffened and flattened in the air still show the tradition of Quarton's arabesques. The "cubic" breaks in folds, the decided light, the loose work with strokes apparent and the greyish shadows of the flesh are proper to Provençal painting.

Isolate any figure: this young girl accompanying the Virgin at her marriage (fig. 10). Modest and straight, she rises from the fluted background of a wall and the rigid folds of her robe seem to continue the molding of the stone and give her the nobility of a columnar statue. Her hands are crossed simply and her smooth round face radiates freshness and young friendship with life. This exquisite naturalness breathes an infallible grace. An intense light crystallizes all this virginal candor; and before so much distinction in simplicity and so much life in such pure forms, one's mind turns toward the dreams of certain French painters of the future, of a Georges de la Tour. If the sculptural bearing separates her completely from Flemish girls the flavor of familiar life distinguishes her also from her Tuscan sisters, far distant in their statuesque perfection. St. Sebastian is no less a stranger to the figures in Flemish and Italian art. His silhouette is nervous and aristocratic; his emotion is restrained; his hair does not appear in disorder and his iconoclastic gesture comes forth without haste from beneath dazzling but immovable



FIG. 10. — THE "MASTER OF ST. SEBASTIAN" (JOSSE LIEFERINX?). — DETAIL OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE VIRGIN (fig. 8).

folds. Like the young girl, he forms part of this serene French family in which both human warmth and human dignity have, miraculously, been preserved.

Or let us isolate an inanimate object: a candlestick, and a napkin placed on the mantelpiece; the boards which close in the manger in the *Adoration*. Not to forget them, sometimes even to give them value is without doubt a Flemish idea. But the manner of making their presence felt is French. They are painted with a swift tenderness, a rapid and sure touch, exact but not insistent because it intends to unite the surface of the object with the enveloping light by just a glancing caress. It is not the serious concern of the Flemish painter to bring out the solid presence of objects which surround man. To the French spirit the object appears only as a companion to man and not his equal filling out his life and rendering its material aspect intense. This humanistic hierarchy is essentially Latin.

Here then are Nicolas Dipre and the "Master of St. Sebastian" who is perhaps Josse Lieferinxe; two painters descended from northern France to become Provençal in their art. Their case is not isolated. Enguerrand Quarton was likewise from Picardy. The list of eleven outstanding painters in Provence in the XV century numbers only three men born in this region. The others came from the north, the center, from Burgundy and the east of France. This fact counts beyond the history of the Provençal school of painting. It reaches to the very essence of the pictorial French genius in the Middle Ages. One feels in Provence of the XV century as nowhere else the subtle mixture of the contrasting nuances of the French sensibility, the sensibility of a nation extending to the Meuse, the Rhine and the Mediterranean, and instinctively maintaining a balance between the temper and civilization of Germanic essence and those of Latin origin, which seem irreconcilable. Europe has defined it with a name precise and always rich in meaning: *L'esprit français*.

The particular role of Provence in the crystallization of the artistic personality of France is a neglected subject. It is worthy of being treated for itself.

CHARLES STERLING

THE LOUVRE CORONATION

AND THE EARLY PHASE OF

FRA ANGELICO'S ART

AMONG the many art treasures brought home by Napoleon from the conquered countries of Europe, was an altarpiece, the *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 1), by Fra Angelico. Along with some other paintings which may have been overlooked, this one was intentionally left behind when the commissars of the Allied Armies, in 1815, took back to their countries the works of art which the Emperor had assembled in his tremendous museum. Fra Angelico's altarpiece was especially marked: "*Roba Vecchia*"—old stuff—not worth returning to Italy.

It is well known that in the period of new Classicism works of the early Renaissance were not highly esteemed, but from the fact that an apparently important painting by Fra Giovanni was denied the honor of being repatriated, we may infer that the monk-painter was particularly undervalued by experts of that day. Such lack of just appreciation, while it has been more than made up for to a certain extent, still prevails to some degree. Among the many painters of the XV century who were rediscovered by amateurs and connoisseurs of the last generation the monk-painter, who was beatified after his death, held a position of his own from the very beginning. This has been recently emphasized by the establishment of a museum of his art within the monastery where he served as friar and painter. Although he has thus been more highly honored than any artist of his time, a kind of prejudice has persisted against the certain perfume of holiness emanating from his work; a prejudice confirmed by Vasari whose tenor was perhaps suggested by the monks of the cloister. During the century between the death of Fra Giovanni and the writing of Vasari, San Marco became famous as the dwelling place of Savonarola. Any monk worth recording in the annals of the monastery was likely to be described as a zealot, like the so-called "*piagnoni*" of the famous preacher's time.

Fra Giovanni must have been a devout friar for otherwise he would not have been beatified. He doubtless wished to communicate his own religious feelings to others through his paintings. But he could not have succeeded in doing this, nor would he have been remembered in the annals of art, had he not also been a great painter. Generally speaking modern scholars have understood the artistic merits of Fra Giovanni's painting. Yet in spite of the valuable analysis of the Friar's

works published by Langton Douglas as early as 1900, correcting many former mistakes, the old prejudice was to reappear, even in books written by sincere admirers of his art. In the latest biography, published in 1930¹, we read that "Fra Angelico had never been an innovator or an investigator in the sense of solving problems", that he "never seeks any precision in purely formal problems or shows any inventive spirit in their solution".

No judgment on the art of a great painter could be more unjust than this one which can be refuted by a thorough examination of Fra Giovanni's early work in its relation to the art of its time.

I.

In speaking of Fra Giovanni's early work we must at once mention the unusual fact that what we are accustomed to call early works are not works by a young painter but of a man about forty years old. The youth of the painter is practically unknown. We know that in 1407 young Guido — that was his name — at the age of twenty, entered the Dominican monastery at Fiesole where he was given the name of Fra Giovanni. We do not know whether he had previously been a regular apprentice in one of the painters' workshops of his native city although some apprenticeship is indicated by Vasari's remark concerning the boy's skill in painting. It is not certain, however, whether this statement is based upon actual knowledge of any works by the young Guido or is merely an author's stock phrase.

From the beginning of the XV century painting had become an art of secondary rank in the city of Giotto. The leading artists were sculptors like Ghiberti, Brunelleschi and Donatello. The workshops of the painters were in the hands of old men, late followers of the art of the *Trecento*. In such a workshop we may imagine the young Guido to have grown up, if it is true that he was a painter's apprentice before he entered the monastery.

Soon after he became a novice he had to leave Florence because the Abbot of the monastery, who had kept faith with the dethroned Pope, Gregory XII, was compelled to evacuate the modest building on the hill of Fiesole. The monks first found refuge in Foligno but later fled to Cortona. In 1418 the Council of Constance brought the schism to an end and the monks of Fiesole were permitted to return to their monastery. Fra Giovanni was a man in his early thirties when he again saw the city of his birth after an absence of ten years. It may not have appeared much altered after one decade within a most decisive period of its artistic development.

Painting was even then far from receiving its due share in the artistic movement which had begun to assert itself strongly enough in other fields of the arts. Florentine painting, before the end of the second decade of the XV century, which

1. PAUL MURATOW, *Fra Angelico*, London-New York, 1930.



FIG. 1. — FRA ANGELICO. — The Coronation of the Virgin (Louvre, Paris).

(Photo Richter)

had seen Donatello's bold statue of *St. George* being placed in its Gothic niche at Or San Michele, was still an obsolete art, exactly as it had been before Fra Giovanni's departure from Fiesole. A large triptych of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, painted by Rossello di Jacopo Franchi (fig. 2), was dedicated as late as 1420. We mention this altarpiece because it provides a good background for the other *Coronation* painted by Fra Giovanni, probably not very much later. We may assume that Fra Giovanni knew the work of his predecessor, as well as a long suc-

cession of similar altarpieces which he had seen when a boy, or which had come from Florence during his stay in the Umbrian monasteries².

The Coronation of the Virgin was a popular theme for altarpieces throughout the *Trecento*. Its representation followed a certain formula from which no painter was allowed to depart. The Saviour and His Mother had to face each other on a throne at the foot of which little angels played musical instruments. Attendant saints were banished to separate panels on either side of the main scene while the different parts were united by an elaborate Gothic frame which formed an integral part of the whole. Such was the traditional conception of the Coronation whose features, unchanged since the early *Trecento*, were still observed like a ritual in 1420.

Who was the painter who dared to conceive an entirely new composition for the Coronation such as that which is to be found in the Louvre? Where could the style of the master have been formed? When had he conceived his new idea of artistic representation expressed in his painting of the *Coronation of the Virgin*? Could he have done so without any outside assistance, or had he found a master greater than himself? We have to use great care in trying to answer these questions. We have mentioned the young man's possible apprenticeship, but hesitate to believe that he learned anything more than how to grind his colours and to handle his brushes. There was in Florence no painter capable of having shown Fra Giovanni the way of his art, of having encouraged him to break from all the holy rules of tradition. Don Lorenzo Monaco, also a monk and the most outstanding predecessor of the young painter, has been called his master. There is no real evidence of any connection between the two monk-painters unless we accept as such the mere fact that an altarpiece begun by Don Lorenzo with the painting of three pinnacles was later finished in the younger master's workshop³.

Don Lorenzo's art was distinguished from the art of Fra Giovanni both by the opposition of two succeeding generations in a time of decisive developments, and by the inherent difference in the art of two distinct provinces of Italian painting. Don Lorenzo was Siennese by birth. His art was un-Florentine from the very beginning and it remained so until the end. With his art, the city of Giotto for the first time in history became indebted to its old rival Siena. For the first time there appeared along the Arno the sweet lineament which had never vanished from the hill town since the time of Duccio. Although the composition of a *Coronation of the Virgin*, which Don Lorenzo finished in 1414 for the Calmaldolese chapel of

2. List of some altarpieces with the *Coronation of the Virgin* painted after 1400: Spinello Aretino's, 1401; Niccolo di Pietro Gerini's and his son Lorenzo di Niccolo together with Spinello Aretino, 1399-1401, for Sta Felicità; Lorenzo di Niccolo, 1408, for Sta Croce; Giovanni dal Ponte, 1410 (now at Chantilly), and his altar in the Academy, Florence.

3. Painted for the Sacristy of Sta Trinita, probably not very long after the death of Don Lorenzo Monaco (1425).



FIG. 2. — ROSSELLO DI JACOPO FRANCHI. — The Coronation of the Virgin (Academy, Florence). . . (Photo Richter)

the church of the Angeli (fig. 3)⁴, distinctly shows the Sienese tradition, it in no way differs from the fundamental conception prevalent in Florentine altarpieces of that time. The Medieval principle of creating a complicated entity from a number of relatively equivalent parts appears perhaps more conspicuously in the altar of an artist who never denied his origin from Gothic Siena than in parallel works of his purely Florentine contemporaries.

The new tendencies in the art of Florence were to destroy this very system. They were to destroy the ideal conception of the everlasting existence of heavenly beings who, not subject to the laws of transitory time and limited space, had been realized by an art that refused to admit for itself the validity of such laws. These same new tendencies were to destroy the concept of a collective work composed of separate parts, which might be done by different hands. It may be recalled in this connection that the destruction of the superindividual concept which had prevailed

4. Now in the Uffizi, Florence.

throughout the Middle Ages was the deepest reason for the sudden abandonment of the foremost artistic concern of Florence,— the completion of the Cathedral's façade. The work had to be abandoned because its very conception had become incompatible with the new idea of the artist's individual freedom and the indivisibility of his work.

In an age which understood so well the impossibility of terminating the old façade as to even plan to tear it down and replace it by a modern construction, the painters were still following their old tradition. Looking back upon the long succession of Florentine altarpieces depicting the Coronation of the Virgin, we may now be able to understand how deep a gap separates the one painted by Fra Giovanni from all others; a gap caused by a revolutionary transformation which reached to the very foundations of art. Fra Giovanni broke from the old practice of putting together a series of separate panels to form the body of the altar. He changed the features of the painted altar by substituting for the transcendental form of spiritual manifestation which is not limited by any earthly laws of human existence, an individual occurrence at a certain moment of time within a limited framework of space. Unity in time and indivisibility in space are the decisive traits of the art of Fra Angelico, who was, despite the celestial name bestowed upon him after his death, definitely an earthly painter. We would even go so far as to call him a realistic painter. Proceeding from his notion of real existence which presupposes that everything portrayed in a painting might have been viewed by the artist in the reality of life, Fra Giovanni had to draw his saints down to earth from their heavenly aloofness, close to the worshippers in the church. It was precisely this earthly reality of a heavenly appearance which bestowed upon Fra Giovanni's altars the special character of holiness. When kneeling in front of his altar people had a right to feel themselves a part of the holy assembly, no longer excluded from a sphere beyond human approach⁵.

II.

Since no relation can be established between Fra Giovanni's art and that of the Florentine painters whose work he might have known, either during his boyhood or after his return to the monastery of Fiesole, an answer should be sought to the question of whether he might have found abroad the ideal of a new art so essentially different from anything he could have learned in the time of his youth in the painters' workshops in Florence. We have called Fra Giovanni a realist, and there was indeed growing abroad a new kind of realistic painting—as yet quite unknown in Florence. The new art already dominated such different parts of Europe

5. Fra Giovanni created the new altar type called "*Sacra Conversazione*" in which Mary is seated with attendant Saints in one room. Although it cannot be proved with certainty that his *Madonna with six Saints* painted for Cosimo de Medici, was the very first of this type, it seems most probable from our research that Fra Giovanni was indeed the creator of this new altar which was to replace the old altar with Mary and Saints.



(Photo Richter)

FIG. 3. — DON LORENZO MONACO. — The Coronation of the Virgin (Uffizi, Florence).

as the Duchy of Burgundy, the borders of the lake of Constance, the Hanseatic towns in the north of Germany, and some centers of Italian painting from Verona and Venice to Rome and Naples. Everywhere the same kind of new realism began to germinate out of old roots still deeply implanted in the soil of Medieval idealism. Like an autumnal meadow covered overnight with thousands of the lilac-coloured blossoms of *Colchicum*, the old compositions began to flower again with bright colours and strange shapes. The normal store of hitherto current forms appears to have multiplied in an astonishing way. Studies of strange features and intentionally complicated postures of human bodies reanimated the restricted stock of forms used in the workshops of the older painters. It was a great experiment of immediate transition from the infinite existence of heavenly beings, represented in Medieval paintings, to the finite reality of individually studied forms, belonging to the world of humanity.

The Umbrian land, to which Fra Giovanni had been banished for ten years, was one of the strongholds of this new art in Italy. Gentile, the most prominent Italian representative of the so-called "International Style", was a native of Fabriano, which is situated not far from Gubbio, the birthplace of another painter who may be claimed for the new realism. Like other artists of the group of the "International Style", Gentile was one of those nomadic painters whose art did not belong to one country. His works were scattered over many parts of Italy, but some of them had been painted for his native province, where Fra Giovanni might have known them before meeting the master himself in Florence. In Foligno he may have seen Ottaviano Nelli, native of Gubbio, at work upon the frescoes of the chapel of the Trinci palace. These frescoes were finished in 1424, long after the monks of Fiesole had left the monastery in Foligno. But Ottaviano might conceivably have begun his work some years earlier. Fra Giovanni may also have seen the works of other painters in the same palace, and elsewhere in Umbria and the Marches, most of them involved in the experiment of a new realism in which two opposing worlds were to be united on the threshold of a new epoch of mankind.

For all of these artists the pictorial realization of the visible world was not the new task of an art about to discover the reality of life; they were satisfied with enlarging their wonted world by some of the surprising wonders of nature. The ambivalent character which results from this double-minded tendency of the "International Style" can be studied in many instances, but in few places can the very collision of two different worlds be so strikingly observed as in the little church of St. John at Urbino, which was decorated with frescoes by the brothers Salimbeni in 1416. Past and present seem to join hands in such a picture as the *Baptism of Christ* (fig. 4). A group of precisely portrayed friends and kinsmen of the donor in their modern garments is set against a group of saints who belong to quite a different world. The saints are represented in the conventional draperies of artificially folded gar-



FIG. 4. — LORENZO AND GIACOMO SALIMBENI. — The Baptism of Christ (Church of S. Giovanni, Urbino). (Photo Richter)

ments which are to be taken, as are the golden haloes behind their idealized features, as a traditional symbol of transcendental holiness.

In like manner the survival of old features within the changed context of a new style comparable to the quotation of words from an outmoded language amidst a new kind of mental expression can be found, for instance, in a painting by Pisanello for which he borrowed an old likeness of the Madonna in order to show the wonder of her celestial appearance above two quite worldly saints (fig. 5). The old painting of *Mary with the Child*, which Pisanello made use of, must have been widely known, since copies can be found in French miniatures as well as in north German altar paintings⁶. We even know the sketch Pisanello made in his notebook which he eventually used for the picture, just as he often consulted the same notebook for studies of living models he might introduce into his paintings.

Having called Fra Giovanni a realist, we have now to emphasize the fundamentally different character of his realism from the character of the realism devel-

6. *Les Très-Belles Heures du Duc de Berry* and *Les Grandes Heures du Duc de Rohan*; Konrad von Soest, *Altar of Niederwildungen, Nativity*, in the church of St. Mary, Dortmund; *Altar of St. Jacob*, Lübeck, now in the Museum of Schwerin. (C. GLASER, *Italienische Bildmotive in der altdeutschen Malerei*, in: "Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst", XXV, 1914, p. 145.)



(Photo Richter)

FIG. 5. — PISANELLO. — Virgin with the Child and the Saints Anthony and George (National Gallery, London).

oped by that so-called "International Style" which Fra Giovanni must be supposed to have known when he was living and traveling in the Umbrian province. The basic character of the art of the Florentine monk is plainly opposed to the principles of an art which goes into detail before having established a solid foundation upon which to build a picture of reality. Fra Giovanni's realism is based upon a deep insight into the fundamental unity of all realizable existence of which Heaven as well as Hell can be a part. Fra Giovanni was blind to all the marvelous accomplishments of the art he encountered while living abroad. He was a Florentine and, as such, he was as stubborn as any of his fellow-citizens who left that city for a time to work abroad — such painters as Paolo Uccello, Fra Filippo Lippi, Andrea del Castagno — but returned with their art quite unchanged.

Florence may be considered as stubborn as her sons, secluding herself as she did from most foreign influences, even refusing to follow the way of the most renowned of alien artists, Gentile da Fabriano, who in 1422 became a member of the painters' guild there after Palla Strozzi commissioned him to paint an Altar with the *Adoration of the Kings* for a chapel in the church of Sta Trinita (fig. 6). Palla was not only the wealthiest man of pre-Medici Florence but a man of the most refined culture, well known for his intellectual and aesthetic accomplishments. It is interesting to note that in the beginning of the third decade so lavish a donor and so ambitious a connoisseur found no local painter whom he considered equal to the task of decorating the chapel of his family with a new altar-piece. Therefore he called upon old Gentile who evidently surpassed all expectations creating one of the most beautiful paintings in the new manner in which he was so expert. He had a great liking for precious woven silks and golden ornaments with which to enrich his paintings. He studied many different features of animals as well as of human beings to attract fresh attention to his works. He sketched all forms of



FIG. 6. — GENTILE DA FABRIANO. — The Adoration of the Kings (Uffizi, Florence).

(Photo Richter)

landscape and architecture which he incorporated into the richly coloured and dense mosaic of his altarpiece.

Never had anything similar been seen in Florence. One would suppose that this gorgeous painting, which must have appeared as a most precious erratic piece of art against the exclusive background of *Trecento* painting, would have exerted a strong influence. Such was not the case. Although another altar which the master painted during his three years in Florence⁷ was copied eight years later by the versatile old Bicci di Lorenzo, it would be preposterous to take this isolated fact as proof of any real influence of Gentile's art in the city which answered his genius with silence.

Fra Giovanni, more than any other Florentine master, had experienced the temptations of that new style which sent its main representative into Florence after his return from abroad. He had resisted such temptations when he was a young member of distant monasteries, and he still resisted after he had finally chosen his own way, at the moment when Gentile cast his spell over his native city.

7. Altar with *Madonna and Saints*, painted in 1425 for S. Niccolo, ordered by Bernardo di Castello Quaratesi.

III.

The kind of empiristic approach to the outer world attempted in Gentile's pompous altars was in strict opposition to the new principles just beginning to be realized in Florentine painting. When Gentile da Fabriano left Florence in 1425, the destiny of Florentine painting was about to be decided by the overwhelming event of Masaccio's work in the Brancacci chapel at Sta Maria del Carmine. In his biography of the painter, Vasari lists all the artists who came to study the frescoes during more than a century. At the head of the list appears the name of Fra Giovanni. There

is no reason to doubt that Fra Giovanni did study those frescoes because no artist conscious of the trends of the time could ignore the most decisive event in the realm of modern painting. However, although there are quite obvious stylistic parallels between the art of Fra Angelico and the art of Masaccio, even more manifest are certain conspicuous differences which clearly show that Fra Angelico could not have developed his style under the influence of the younger master's art, even if this art tended to confirm his own ideas.

The art of a painter nearing his forties can be irritated, as may be seen in the belated change in Giovanni dal Ponte's style, but it can hardly any longer be driven to a new development, which is what we would have to assume if Fra Giovanni were to be considered a late pupil of the young genius Masaccio. How Masaccio's art influenced the development of a young artist may be clearly observed in the early paintings of Fra Filippo Lippi who, as a boy, entered the monastery in whose church Masaccio executed his famous frescoes. Early paintings of



(Photo Richter)

FIG. 7. — FRA FILIPPO LIPPI. — Virgin and Child
(Museum of Corneto Tarquinia)

Fra Filippo (fig. 7) which can be dated before or soon after his departure for Padua where he was to stay until 1437, are strong testimonials to a bold spirit that



FIG. 8. — GIOVANNI DAL PONTE. — San Pietro Enthroned (Uffizi, Florence).

(Photo Richter)

understood by realism a kind of ruthless naturalism, even to the point of ugliness⁸. Fra Giovanni had never accepted the truth which Donatello had been the first to teach: that the deepest feeling may be hidden in a plain body.

There seems to have existed quite a strong opposition against this type of naturalism which Fra Filippo himself later renounced under the influence of Fra Giovanni⁹. This opposition shows in the well known story, related by Vasari, about Brunelleschi's criticism of the boorish features of Donatello's Christ on the Cross in Sta Croce. Brunelleschi made another Crucifix. Both statues are still preserved. This is stronger proof than any dubious anecdote of Vasari that the architect-sculptor, by the more refined appearance of his image, did criticize the rather brutal naturalism of his old friend Donatello. It may be wrong to draw such far reaching conclusions as to believe that artistic Florence was split into opposing factions in the same manner as we see cliques of artists combatting one another in modern times. But there must have been certain factions in Florence in the third decade of the XV century, not only those separated by the inevitable differences of age, but those distinguished by opposite artistic conceptions. Masaccio, as well as his pupil Fra Filippo, belonged to the fellowship of Donatello; Fra Giovanni's style was apparently encouraged by the art of Brunelleschi.

8. A new valuation of Fra Filippo's early art was initiated by B. BERENSON ("Bollettino d'Arte", 1932-33) and accepted by MARIO SALMI in *La Giovinezza di Fra Filippo Lippi*, "Rivista d'Arte", 1936, p. I.

9. When he finished the *Adoration of the Kings* of the Cook Collection in Richmond, begun by Fra Giovanni, about 1442. (B. BERENSON, *op. cit.*)

We shall emphasize this point later. It must first be made clear that other relations also existed tending toward the same direction. We must assume that groups of connoisseurs favored the different cliques of artists and we must not forget that the several ecclesiastical orders may have preferred different types of artistic expression for the altars of their churches. It may be assumed that the Franciscan monks, for whose church Donatello carved his crucifix, had quite another vision of the Son of God than had the Dominicans for whom Brunelleschi's crucifix was designed. The contrast between the two buildings, the rather plain church of Sta Croce and the richly vaulted church of Sta Maria Novella, is reflected in the contrast between the two crucifixes. Fra Angelico was a member of the high class order of the Dominicans whose churches he decorated. Fra Filippo was a monk of the mendicant order of the Carmelites for whom Masaccio had worked.

Too much stress upon such interrelations is not intended. But it may be assumed that the rich donors of altarpieces followed their personal taste in the selection of artists and the heads of monasteries or churches to whom such gifts were entrusted had also to approve the choice. This merely indicates the intricacies of the artistic situation in Florence during the first quarter of the XV century. One must bear in mind how rich and how differentiated was the artistic harvest in these particular years. During the first half of this prodigious time Don Lorenzo Monaco finished his altarpiece of the *Coronation*. At the same time Paolo Uccello probably began his frescoes in the so-called "*Chiostro Verde*". Ghiberti's first bronze door for the Baptistery was erected after more than twenty years of work. Many of the famous buildings of Brunelleschi began to take definite shape during this period and it must not be forgotten that at the Gothic building of Or San Michele a niche was built in the decorative forms of the new style.

Finally a new generation had segregated itself from the line of its predecessors. We reaffirm the point however, that the difference of generations was not decisive in itself. Surely it was not in the case of Fra Giovanni. Comparing his works with those of his coeval, Giovanni dal Ponte, one may easily observe what happened to an artist who, as a boy, began his career according to custom in one of the popular workshops. After having thus developed his style in his youth, dal Ponte must have later studied the frescoes of Masaccio. In accordance with the new tendencies he evidently tried to enhance the plasticity of his figures and to deepen the spatial impression. But he proved unable to change the fundamentals of his art which remained forever subject to the tradition of the late *Trecento* in the orbit of which he had grown up (fig. 8). In praising an artist, the biographer usually likes to emphasize his prodigious premature development. This is what Vasari may have done when he praised Fra Giovanni's early skill in painting. The opposite is true. The miracle of Fra Giovanni's art lies in its late awakening which can be understood when seen as a part of contemporaneous Florentine painting. Florentine painting was late to awaken

and it did so with a violent outburst during the first half of the third decade.

Fra Giovanni, neither pupil nor follower of Masaccio, must be considered one of the great "innovators" of this decisive period of Florentine painting. Assuming this to be a fundamental truth we must suppose that about the year 1425 Fra Giovanni had formed his own personal style. He may have done so somewhat earlier but certainly not later.

Thus far we have intentionally avoided any discussion of the documentary evidence connected with the dating of Fra Giovanni's *Coronation* in the



(Photo Richter)

FIG. 9. — WORKSHOP OF FRA ANGELICO. — Coronation of the Virgin (Museo San Marco, Florence).

Louvre¹⁰. The approximate date of 1425 is arrived at by the juxtaposition of the Louvre *Coronation* and another *Coronation of the Virgin* painted by Fra Giovanni workshop, on one of the four reliquaries ordered for the main Altar of Sta Maria Novella by the pious Dominican, Giovanni Masi (fig. 9)¹¹. This small *Coronation* is a mere extract from the great altarpiece and it must be inferred that it was painted somewhat later than the Louvre picture. Since its donor, Giovanni Masi, died in 1430, it is reasonable to conclude that the reliquary was finished in that year, though the proof is obviously not definite.

We may finally draw attention to the Gothic structure of the throne under which the Coronation is depicted in the Louvre picture, as it is one of the very few instances of its kind in the painter's work¹². In the Masi *Coronation* the Gothic throne is already replaced by a characteristic modern architecture, which proves the artist's definite break from the decorative forms of preceding years. We should not emphasize this point were it not for the fact that Fra Giovanni was particularly interested in the architectural forms which he used for the background of his compositions and that he always followed the standard set by Brunelleschi.

Fra Giovanni, however, did much more than merely borrow the features of the great architect's buildings. The very principles of his art are comparable to those which were arising in the new architecture.

In any architecture of Brunelleschi there exists the same kind of relation between the parts and the whole: between a column and the spatial sector to which it belongs and between any such sector and the whole of the building, as there exists between the individual figures surrounding the throne of the Coronation and their integration to a totality meaning more than a mere summation. Within this decade, decisive for the formation of a new style, in which the overwhelming influence of Brunelleschi's art made itself more and more strongly felt, a special kinship between him and the friar-painter became evident. We would not call the painter a pupil of the architect, but it should be understood that the art of painting was no longer excluded from the new art after Fra Giovanni had found it possible to apply to his painting the laws given by the great architect.

10. LANGTON DOUGLAS, in: *Fra Angelico*, London, 1900, gave the date of 1425; FRIDA SCHOTTMULLER, in: *Fra Angelico* (Klassiker der Kunst), Berlin-Leipzig, 1924, dated the altar between 1430 and 1440. MURATOW (*op. cit.*) went back to the date given by Langton Douglas, but he did not understand the importance of the question for the statement of the artist's position within the stylistic development of his time.

11. A third *Coronation*, painted for Sta Egidio, now in the museum of S. Marco, seems to be painted after the Louvre picture. It ought not to be discussed here.

12. The *Madonna with Angels* in the Stadel-Museum, Frankfurt a/M., shows a similar Gothic throne. This picture is generally assumed to be one of the earliest known works of Fra Giovanni. But with the Angels surrounding Mary like a wreath it cannot be dated much earlier than the *Coronation* of the Louvre, the composition of which follows a similar pattern.

CURT GLASER

A TITIAN PROBLEM

THE SEVEN ACTS OF MERCY

SOME YEARS AGO I bought a set of copperplate engravings representing the Seven Acts of Mercy and purporting to be after Titian. All seven prints are signed "Titian" or "Titian pinx". All are signed in the margin by the publisher — "In Padoua p. M. Bolzetta". Number V is signed by the engraver "Gio. Suizzero f"; Number VI bears the nearly identical signature "G. Suizzero f", and since the heavy-handed touch is throughout uniform, it is safe to assume that Giovanni Suizzero is the executant. The printed surface is: 103x147 mm. Under each subject is an elegiac distych in Latin, the whole constituting a fourteen-line poem — a sort of humanistic, spiritual sonnet — which I here print entire in the hope that someone better versed than I in the Latin poetry of the Renaissance may identify and date it.

*Suscipe, pasce, ciba, si se tibi sistat egenus:
Arbore de vita irena parata tibi.
Cordis ab affectu Sitientes prolue, pellet
Et tibi de Vitae flumine Iova sitim.
Quis praesto Peregrinus adest: citus Ostia pandet:
Ostia sic cæli pandet Iova tibi.
Indue quos nudos cernis lacerosque, Vicissim:
Te Sancta Christi Veste Iehova teget.
Quem gravis in lectum morbus coniecit, adito:
Senseris in morbo propitiumque DEVM.
Invisit Dominus Satanæ nos compede Vincitos:
Ob Dominum Vincitos visere teque juvet.
Officium fato functis persolve supremum:
Vera tibi vitae janua CHRISTVS erit.*

Concerning its publisher Matthias Bolzetta there is little information. He was nicknamed Cadorin from his birthplace, Cadore, which was also Titian's. He was too obscure to be listed by Baldinucci or the *Abecedario*, and since he was not a painter-engraver, he was ignored by the omniscient Bartsch. Thieme-Becker is silent concerning him.

The old Nagler, *Künstler-Lexicon*, in the section on Engravers devotes a few lines to him. His name was Matthäus or Matthias (both German forms), he was active at Padua about 1650, he engraved after Titian and others, owned some plates of Carpioni, and often signed, from his birth place, CADORIN. I have sought his prints in vain at London, Boston, Philadelphia and New York.

Since his name is given in the German form, Matthias, he was either German or of German extraction, as are many inhabitants of the Dolomites, and his Paduan shop seems also to have had a German tinge, for the engraver of our prints is John the Swiss (*Suizzero*). This suggests that the very carefully etched copies of these prints by Conrad Meyer (1618-1680) of Zurich may not have been a piracy, but a legitimate business transaction. The Kupferstichkabinett at Berlin, which kindly furnished me with photographs, has an incomplete set of the Meyers, lacking Nos. II and IV. A cut of Meyer's Number V has been published by Th. Kutschmann¹. Meyer omitted the Titian signatures and the Latin captions as of no interest to his Protestant public, and in compensation disfigured the bottom of his prints by titles in a big black letter and in the upper margin engraved the references to "*Matthew*", XXI. The Bolzetta series and the five photographs of Meyer are in the print collection of the Princeton Art Museum.

Bolzetta's series was made somewhere about 1650. These were cheap little prints to serve a devotional purpose. The great name of Titian did little or nothing to enhance such a devotional value, and we cannot reasonably imagine that he affixed it fraudulently or from any other reason than that he believed his originals to be creations of his greatest fellow townsman. But before facing the problem that these poor versions may echo rather faithfully, if unskillfully, a lost mural series by Titian, it may be well to offer a brief commentary on the series as a whole and on its individual members.

The series has the unusual feature, of secondary scenes, symbolic or historical, in a sort of continuous narrative. Such a feature is proper enough to narrative painting in Carpaccio's time. I do not know it in narrative painting of advanced baroque date. The list of secondary subjects is as follows:

- No. I. *Feeding the hungry*: (fig. 1.) The miraculous loaves and fishes in foreground.
- No. II. *Giving drink to the thirsty*: (fig. 2.) Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well.
- No. III. *Aiding the Stranger*: (fig. 3.) Tobias and the Archangel Raphael.
- No. IV. *Clothing the Naked*: (fig. 4.) Ill-clad women and children, at the left, subject uncertain.

1. In: *Geschichte der deutschen Illustration*, Berlin, 1899, Bd. I, fig. 78.



*Suscipe, pasce, ciba, si se tibi sistat egenus.
 Arbore de Vitæ crena parata tibi* In Padua p. M. Bolzetta
 I

FIG. 1. — ENGRAVING AFTER TITIAN(?). — *The Seven Acts of Mercy. I. Feeding the hungry.* — The author's collection.

- No. V. *Visiting the sick:* (fig. 5.) Three mural paintings—Job and his friends, Lazarus.
- No. VI. *Visiting prisoners:* (fig. 6.) The Roman Daughter offering her breast to her father, at left.
- No. VII. *Burying the Dead:* (fig. 7.) A burial scene, left distance.

No. I. The hairdressing of the girl carrying a loaded platter is that which prevailed in Italy from about 1490 to 1505. The hair is parted high over the brow and knotted in a little "bun" at the crown of the head. Selected stray locks fall over the temples. This coiffure may be dated in the frescoes and portraits of Ghirlandaio in Florence, 1488 on, and in Carpaccio's St. Ursula series painted in the 1490's. Beyond this there is little to remark except the frequent representation of receding architectural spaces. The space is often, one may say, three rooms deep. This is a feature more likely to be used at a time when architectural perspective was still a delightful novelty, than at a time when it was a commonplace. Carpaccio now and then played with this theme of receding closed spaces. In this respect his *Birth of the Virgin* at



*Corbis ab affectu sitientis prolue, pelles
Et tibi de Vita flumine JOVA sitim. Padua p. M. Bologna*

FIG. 2. — ENGRAVING AFTER TITIAN(?). — *The Seven Acts of Mercy. II. Giving drink to the thirsty.* — The author's collection.



*Quis praeſto? Peregrinus adeſt: citus: Ostia pande.
Oſtia miſi cali pandet JOVA tibi.
In Padua p. M. Bologna.*

FIG. 3. — ENGRAVING AFTER TITIAN(?). — *The Seven Acts of Mercy. III. Aiding the stranger.* — The author's collection.

Bergamo (*Molmenti* opp. p. 168) fairly anticipates De Hooch.

No. II. The hairdressing of the two women at the left is that already noted; their full sleeves suggest the same period, not much later than 1500.

No. III. The big tree trunk dark against the sky is characteristic of Giorgione and early Titian. The little Gothic city gate, left centre, is in the taste of the Campagnola prints and the numerous drawings of Giorgionesque type. I cannot recall such a feature in any Italian picture painted after 1520.

No. IV. Nothing characteristic here except the conical cap of the young man, right, with his hand on his breast. It and his long hair are common in Renaissance portraits from about 1480 to 1500.

No. V. The hairdressing of the crowned young woman approaching the bed is that already noted under Nos. I and II as an early XVI century fashion. Her elaborately puffed sleeves are right for the same years.

No. VI. Same hairdressing in the Roman Daughter; interest in receding closed spaces like that noted in No. I, again suggesting a period when scientific perspective still retained a charm of novelty.

No. VII. Far the most accomplished composition; the problem of moonlight and candle light combined, audacious and novel. The group has striking analogies with Titian's *Entombment* in the Louvre painted probably some twenty-five years later. The staging of the composition, a screening cliff with over-hanging branches and a rather small outlet to the sky is very like that of Giorgione's *Three Philosophers at Vienna*. The earlier version, revealed recently by the X-ray², was probably painted not much later than 1500. The foreshortened corpse finds its analogy in Carpaccio's *St. George and the Dragon* in the School of S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni, of the very early XVI century.

But the most convincing evidence of date is the presence throughout our series

2. See DR. GEORGE M. RICHTER'S and DUNCAN PHILLIP'S works on *Giorgione*.



*Induc quos nudos cernis lacerosque, vicissim
Te. Sancta Christi Veste JEHOUA teget.* Padua p. M. Bolzetta

FIG. 4. — ENGRAVING AFTER TITIAN(?). — *The Seven Acts of Mercy. IV. Clothing the naked.* — The author's collection.



*Quem gravis inlectum morbus conjecit, adito:
Senseris in morbo propitiumque DEVM.* Padua p. M. Bolzetta.

FIG. 5. — ENGRAVING AFTER TITIAN(?). — *The Seven Acts of Mercy. V. Visiting the sick.* — The author's collection.

of what may be called a flexible leather sock. It generally wrinkles about the ankles, reaches about half way to the knee, and there often turns over. It is found abundantly in Venetian paintings of the second half of the XV century. It is frequent in the sketch books of Jacopo Bellini, is found occasionally in pictures of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, Mansueti and Carpaccio, is sporadic in Cima's works up to about 1510. I relegate the evidence to a footnote³. The footgear of the XVII century was of a more substantial sort. It seems to me this single archeological feature dates the originals of Bolzetta's prints not far from 1500.

In general the composition looks like a continuation or elaboration of that of Carpaccio, with more classical architectural accessories. We find this classicizing tendency more fully developed in Titian's frescos of about 1510 at Padua. And this fact, irrespective of authorship, suggests a date some years earlier for the *Seven Acts of Mercy*. In short a variety of evidence indicates a date very near 1500. And this date makes Titian's authorship at least possible, even probable. We may immediately exclude such *retardataires* as the followers of Gentile Bellini, Mansueti and his sort. The setting is too classical, the drawing of the figure too flexible and accomplished. Only a young and talented painter moving toward a high Renaissance style could have created these pictures.

Before exploring this exciting possibility some material aspects of this series should be briefly considered. Plainly it is a set of mural decorations made for a hospital or almshouse. This cannot have been in a great city like Venice or Padua, for such a series in so conspicuous a place could not have escaped notice through four hundred years of note-taking and guidebook making. The charitable foundation for which this series was painted must have been obscurely located in the country. If so it was probably on a small scale, and the murals relatively small. One may reasonably

3. The point may be conveniently checked from the following cuts in: VAN MARLE'S *The Italian Schools of Painting*; Vol. XVII, figs. 40, 41, 54, 58, 89, 92, 112, 160, 166, 233; Vol. XVIII, figs. 31, pls opposite pp. 220, 134, 180.



Invisit Dominus Satana nos compede vinclis:
 Ob Dominum, Vinclis visere tecum juvet.
 Titian pinxit.
 FIG. 6. — ENGRAVING AFTER TITIAN(?). — *The Seven Acts of Mercy, VI. Visiting prisoners.* — The author's collection.

imagine a room somewhat smaller than the assembly room of S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni at Venice, with the cornice pictures about the scale of Carpaccio's, say about five feet high and seven feet long. It is impossible to reconstruct an arrangement which was conditioned by doors and windows but we can hardly imagine more than three on a wall. Taking frames and intervening pilasters into account, this would indicate a hall about twenty-five feet long. The layout may have been very like that of the hospital ward represented in Number V. (fig. 5). We have to do

with a rather unimportant job, probably in the country.

If we may be reasonably insistent that this series was painted not later than 1505, then our alternative to Bolzetta's label of Titian is some provincial painter who also was moving toward a Renaissance style. Pordenone, born 1483, would be a theoretical possibility, but it is hard to imagine him doing anything so accomplished in his twenty-second year. Furthermore the numerous analogies between Number VII, *Burying the Dead*, and Titian's famous *Entombment* become highly significant of common authorship now we know that *Burying the Dead* is by about twenty-five years the earlier. An artist of Titian's calibre is not likely to be influenced by a composition painted in the provinces by some nobody, but a great and prolific artist is always likely to keep on reusing and adapting whatever he has done in the past. From Bolzetta's rude copies it is hazardous to infer much about the style of the originals, but the broad and effective distribution of light and dark, the enveloping of the nude in half light against light are features proper to Titian in his maturity.

Then the general situation implies Titian's authorship. An obscure print publisher, born at Titian's Cadore, is looking over drawings of seven paintings representing the Seven Acts of Mercy, and plans a cheap set of prints chiefly for devotional purposes. Since he is in a famous university town where many pious folk are well educated, he decides to use as captions the distiches of a Latin poem. He knows nothing about the painter. But as a shrewd man of business he decides it would help to sell his prints to call them Titians. So Cadorin deliberately perpetrates a retrospective fraud upon the memory of his greatest fellow citizen, by instructing his engraver, Giovanni Suizzero, to add Titian's signature to each print.

Psychologically this simply doesn't make sense. To the buyers Bolzetta had in mind, they were not the collecting public, it made virtually no difference who painted the originals of the prints. Indeed it is probable that the series was aimed not at his



*Officium fato functis persolue supremum:
Vera tibi Vitæ janua CHRISTVS erit.*
En Padua p. M. Bolzetta

VII

FIG. 7. — ENGRAVING AFTER TITIAN(?). — *The Seven Acts of Mercy. VII. Burying the dead.* — The author's collection.

Paduan *clientèle* but rather at the country folk near the hospital for which the original pictures were made. These would be inexpensive souvenirs like our modern picture postcards. Such an assumption would account for their present rarity. Nobody valued them, they were below the dignity of print collectors, a class which abounded when these prints were made. Under these conditions a fraudulent signing would have been an affront to Titian's memory, which we may hardly imagine a Cadorn offering. We must conclude that Bolzetta believed Titian was the painter of the series. He may have guessed this erroneously as an incompetent expert; some one may have misinformed him. The point is that any supposition that Bolzetta acted in bad faith is untenable. Such an act would have been not merely unworthy but also useless. The engraved signatures may have been affixed innocently as a sort of label. It seems to me more likely that similar signatures were on the original pictures. That surely is the simplest hypothesis, and nothing in the prints contradicts it.

Probably the almshouse or hospital for which the series were made was in the mountains in the general region of Cadore. Bolzetta, whose nickname Cadorin shows he had a pride in his native village, could have known of such a series and very likely made the engraver's copy with his own hand. Titian, who throughout his whole life maintained filial relations with his native village, might well have painted such a series anywhere about 1500 before he was well established in Venice, and if he made them to be seen by his old neighbors, he would naturally have signed them. He would have been about twenty-three to twenty-six years old, and glad to get recognition for his work. Later, when his fame was established, though he signed not infrequently, he had no reason to sign at all. All this is frankly in the realm of hypothesis, but does any other hypothesis give us a more reasonable explanation of the problem before us? Indeed if our dating is right, no attribution to any other painter is as attractive, indeed such alternative attributions are pretty well excluded. It seems to me highly probable that we have in Bolzetta's prints a fairly faithful if rather dull echo of Titian's earliest works.

If so, some reconsideration of Titian's velleities is necessary. Plainly the painter of the *Seven Acts of Mercy* had a gift as a narrative painter, the energy, vivacity, and picturesqueness proper to an intelligent admirer of Carpaccio. Plainly this painter could have gone far in that field. If Titian painted singularly few narratives, it was probably from lack of opportunity. In the first decade of the XVI century, all the great Venetian Schools were decorated or their spaces earmarked for established painters. Even the places for altarpieces in the old churches were filled by the Bellini, the Vivarini, or their numerous assistants and imitators. There was little opportunity for a newcomer in narrative painting until after 1540 when some of the old schools were burnt out, and new schools and churches built. Giorgione had probably no reluctance to paint altarpieces, a lucrative branch of the painter's practice. Lack of opportunity to paint big pictures may well have reinforced his love of little idyllic themes, and may have, because the old ecclesiastical market was very dull and unpromising, directed him to the new market of amateurs and collectors. The art historian too often forgets that the artist has to make a living and that his career is conditioned by opportunity. Titian remained always potentially a great narrative painter. To this his frescoes at Padua, the *Este Mythologies*, the *Battle of Cadore*, and the *Presentation of the Virgin* bear emphatic witness. It was probably business considerations that largely limited his output to portraits and altarpieces. It does not seem fanciful to me to divine in the *Seven Acts of Mercy* the germs of that development which led through the Paduan frescoes, the *Este Mythologies* and the *Entombment*, to the *Battle of Cadore*.

FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.



FIG. 1. — IBELS. — Poster for *Le Lever du Critique*.

“L’AFFICHE MODERNE”

A REVIVAL OF POSTER ART AFTER 1880

THE DECADE 1890 to 1900 witnessed a rebirth of two branches of the art of lithography¹. During this period both the original lithograph in color (*l'estampe originale*) and the colored poster took on a new lease of life, and the more recent history of each looks back to these last years of the XIX century as a sort of *temps heroique*. It was at this time that periodicals such as the “*Estampe Originale*” and the “*Estampe Moderne*” were born, both collectors’ organs reflecting the renewed interest in the lithograph as a work of art closely expressive of the artist’s personality; at this same time too “*La Plume*”, “*La Revue Blanche*”, “*Le Figaro Illustré*” began publishing works done especially for their readers; and “*L’Estampe et L’Affiche*” made posters as well as smaller prints known to the collector². Shops which sold the poster were opened in Paris, Munich and Vienna, and the amateur of the poster came into being. Even before the celebration of the centenary of lithography by a tremendous exhibition in Paris in 1895 the poster and the print were being collected, studied, and catalogued as works of art. The first historical study of the poster, and the first reproduction of Chéret was published in

1. I wish to thank Louis Hechenbleikner and Louise Bourgeois for their assistance in the interpretation of some of the methods of lithographic printing analyzed in this article, and Beaumont Newhall, of the Museum of Modern Art, for his helpfulness in making reference material available to me.

2. “*L’Estampe Originale*” was begun before 1895; “*L’Estampe Moderne*” and “*L’Estampe et l’Affiche*” in 1897; “*La Plume*” started in 1889, and “*La Revue Blanche*” founded in Brussels in 1890 moved to Paris in 1891. “*Le Figaro Illustré*”, of 1883 is at once the earliest and stylistically the least advanced of these publications. The first British periodical produced by chromolithography was “*The Little One’s Own Colored Picture Paper*” begun in 1885. See: R. M. BURCH, *Colour Printing and Colour Printers*, London, 1910.



FIG. 2. — J. CHERET. — Poster for "Faust" with Lydia Thompson, 1869.

this "*Gazette*" in 1884³.

These developments have often been commented on with wonder and simple amazement, and with a great deal of pleasure. Any discussion of the period assumes the poster and the print as among the best and most characteristic examples of the style of the time—in a way that is not assumed for any period before or since. Where any explanation has been attempted it has been customary to attribute the revival to the influence of the work of one particular artist—Chéret or Lautrec in the poster, Bonnard or Vuillard in the lithographic print. Yet it is probable that the revival of the lithograph, and particularly of the poster in colors, which we propose to study here, is in the large no such accidental phenomenon.

By 1850 the first enthusiasm for the art of lithography had died out. As Maindron and others have shown, the sort of original work that had been done from 1816 on by such men as Géricault, Charlet, and Delacroix, was replaced by a style which concentrated above all on the reproduction of paintings, a mechanical reproduction which the craftsmen who specialized in it did their best to call a "translation"⁴. What little work they did was carried out in black and white, and much of it, as in the case of Daumier, was considered as not quite properly within the realm of art. We cannot follow this history in all its detail. It is significant, however, that the advanced painters of the period in no way remedied the situation. With the exception of his book poster for Champfleury (*Chats*, 1869), Manet's work was entirely black and white reproductions of his paintings. Of the other impressionists Pissarro was the most active, but even he executed no lithographs between 1874 and 1894; the work of the others was meagre; when it was in color it was directly derivative from their paintings; and it dates almost completely from after 1890, when the revival of lithog-

3. See: ERNEST MAINDRON, *Les Affiches Illustrées*, in: "*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*", XXX, 1884, pp. 419-433, 533-547. This is expanded into the volume *Les Affiches Illustrées*, Paris, 1886, followed in 1896 by another volume of the same title. Constant reference has been made to the text, and especially to the reproductions in color, in Maindron's three works.

4. See: HENRI BOUCHOT, *La Lithographie*, Paris, 1895; E MAINDRON, in: "*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*", *op. cit.*; HENRI DELABORDE, *La Lithographie en France depuis son origine*, in "*Mélanges sur l'Art Contemporain*", Paris, 1863; this last indicated to me by Andrew Ritchie.

raphy had received an impetus from artists of a newer style⁵. This is particularly important in view of the attribution to the impressionists of an important role in the revival of color lithography.

The technical foundation for the revival of the colored poster in the late eighties and nineties and the role that recent technical advances may have played in its sudden flowering is difficult to determine with precision. The use of color was implied in Senefelder's original discovery, and by 1837 Engelman, the chief exploiter of the lithographic process at this period in France, had taken out a patent which for the first time used the word "chromolithography"⁶. But in spite of this, and of an almost simultaneous similar invention in England, the process apparently remained unsatisfactory for many years. The various posters done in the late thirties and forties by such men as Raffet, Gavarni, Tony Johannot, and other lesser known men were in black only⁷. They were, moreover, book posters, destined for bookshop windows, small in size, and combining much printed matter with the lithographed illustration. What color work was produced in France in the forties and fifties was done largely by substitute, and often more old-fashioned methods. Thus about 1845 Rouchon developed a method of printing on *papiers peints* in order to get tinted effects and in this fashion published Baudry's *A St. Augustin*. Maindron mentions that as late as 1865 Van Geleyn (who had succeeded to the large Rouchon printing establishment) revived as more satisfactory a method used much earlier by Prodhomme and others, that of brushing on colors through various stencils. The smaller work of Delarue and Monnier had been carried out in this way; in 1866 Van Geleyn thus executed the famous *Pipes Aristophane*⁸. This was nothing but an adaptation of the method by which the wood-blocks of the *images d'Epinal* were colored. Other men, such as Chaix, Claye, and



FIG. 3. — J. CHERET. — Poster for the Tivoli Wauxhall, 1872.

5. Pissarro did 67 lithographs in all, most of them after 1894; Sisley two, after 1890; the works of Cézanne and Renoir imitated their paintings, and in the case of Renoir were done at the request of editors after a younger generation had revived the medium.

6. See: C. T. C. LEWIS, *The Story of Picture Printing in England*, London, n.d. Lewis refers to *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra*, begun 1835, published 1836 ff.

7. MAINDRON, *op. cit.*

8. JEAN LEAUTAUD, *Henry Monnier and His Group*, in: "International Studio", LXXXVIII, December 1927, pp. 36-43, and MAINDRON, *op. cit.*



FIG. 4. — J. CHERET. — Poster for the Folies-Bergère, 1881.

however, Owen Jones' "Grammar of Ornament" was still printed in flat colors. From 1848 on, until nearly the end of the century, the famous Arundel Society reproductions were being published, although a great many of these were actually printed in Germany. These different examples were of course printed on hand presses, as were all of the pieces shown as examples of the lithographic art in the great London Exhibition of 1851. But mechanical presses were already being worked on. In the forties various forms of the impression roller were made, while in 1852 Siegel of Berlin invented a complete cylindrical lithographic printing machine. It was not, however, until the sixties that perfected versions of the rotary press by the Parisian Enges also became popular in England and America.

Thus by 1870 all the conditions for the good and rapid mechanical reproduction of colored posters were available to lithographic printers, and the possibilities of original work seemingly smaller than before. But, as so often happens, it was just at this moment that changes were introduced which revolutionized the style and its technique. Credit for at least a great part of these changes must go to Jules Chéret

Simon, continued to experiment with zinc and wood to replace stone. Evidently none of these substitutes was found really satisfactory, for as late as 1896, Lemerrier, owner of one of the largest lithographic printing houses in Paris, was still intent on proving that a zinc plate could hardly be told from one done on stone⁹.

At this time the greatest advances in technique were apparently being made in England, where the desire for the exact reproduction of masterpieces and of documents of various kinds provided the impetus. As early as 1839 the prospectus of Boys' "Picturesque Architecture" printed by Hullmandel, announced the achievement of "various effects of light and shade" resulting "from transparent and graduated tints" that replaced the opaque colors and flat tints previously used¹⁰. As late as 1850,

9. AUGUSTE LEMERCIER, *La Lithographie Française de 1796 à 1896: Manuel Pratique*, Paris, 1896(?), pp. 206-207, and the color plate which reproduced one of Chéret's posters from a zinc plate as a demonstration of the success of the process.

10. For the whole of this passage see: BURCH, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-203, and W. D. RICHMOND, *The Grammar of Lithography*, 6th ed., London, 1886.

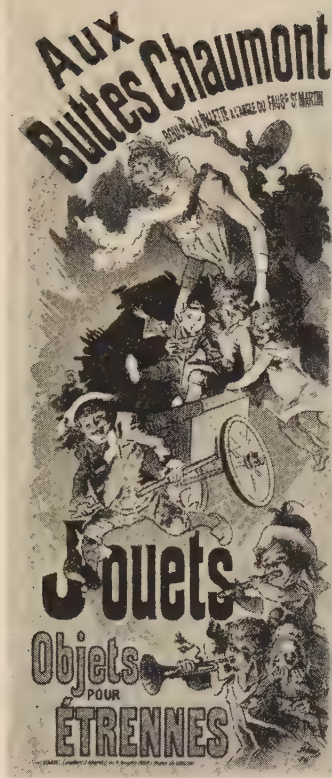


FIG. 5. — J. CHERET. — Poster for "Aux Buttes Chaumont", 1889.

Chéret's first color poster executed in France was the *Bal Valentino* of 1869¹⁴. It had been preceded in 1866 by *La Biche au Bois* for the *Théâtre de la Porte St. Martin*, but this was in monochrome, and so cannot be counted as the first of Chéret's popular series. We reproduce here his *Faust: Lydia Thompson* (fig. 2) of the same time, a poster typical of Chéret's style at this period. It is done in three colors, black, red and green. All of the drawing, figures and letters, is in black, and the main figure is in solid red. The background, which is green above and rose below, with both colors shading off towards the middle but not really meeting, was printed from the two inks put upon the top and bottom of one stone, thus saving the time and expense of an extra step. The lettering is reserved in white above and below, and, although freely drawn, consti-



FIG. 6. — J. CHERET. — Poster for the Musée Grévin, 1891.

11. For the life of Jules Chéret See: BENEZIT, *Dictionnaire*; MAINDRON *op. cit.*, 1884, 1886, and 1894. The dates of the posters illustrated have been established by a confrontation of the reproductions in Maindrón and the catalogue (without illustration) of Chéret's posters that he gives in his 1894 volume.

12. HENRI BERALDI, *Les Graveurs du XIX siècle*, fasc. 4, 1886, supplément, pp. 1-3.

13. GUSTAVE KAHN, ET AL., *Chéret*, Paris, n.d., p. 11. Sponsel's contention (*Das Moderne Plakat*, p. 13) that Chéret was influenced by the style of Grévin seems to be a confusion with the fact that he did posters for the Musée Grévin, which was founded in 1882.

14. KAHN, *op. cit.*

tutes an addition rather than an integral part of the figural design in the center. It has been many times noted that in drawing the posters of this period directly upon the stone, instead of having his composition transferred by some one else, Chéret has made a great step forward in establishing the poster as a medium of artistic expression. Other posters (e.g. *Pan: A Journal of Satire*, 1869, done, like the *Faust*, for London; *Tertulia*, 1871) of these years are of similar design and execution although a blue may replace the green of the background, as in the *Valentino* of 1872, or the solidity of the lettering may be slightly broken by mixing the colors of their outlines, as in the *Bouffes Parisiens* of 1869.

But gradually Chéret's style undergoes certain changes. If we compare the posters of *Tivoli-Wauxhall* of 1872 (fig. 3), and for the *Folies-Bergère* of 1881 (fig. 4) with the *Faust*, we see a loosening of composition, a breaking of line, the introduction of movement in the sequence of the figures, and the substitution of diagonal and circular lines of composition for the verticals and horizontals of the earlier inventions. His figure silhouettes become angular and nervous, and the movement of jagged line from one figure to the next tends to create a continuous pattern that is divorced from the individual representation. Occasionally, as in the *Folies-Bergère*, the lettering participates in this compositional adjustment, is put on the same plane as the figures, and becomes an element of the freely moving composition. But this union of figures and freely drawn letters in one design never becomes a complete, or consistent part of Chéret's style. The *Folies-Bergère* of 1881¹⁵ is perhaps the extreme example, but even here the words above cast a shadow that



FIG. 7. — E. GRASSET. — Poster for the *Fêtes de Paris*, 1886.

15. The whole problem of the development of the form and use of lettering in the posters of this period is an interesting one which we cannot study here. Various influences may be observed: the perpetuation of the kind of Gothic lettering that goes back to beyond the middle of the century; a more recent revival of Gothicizing lettering; a purely manual increase of freedom of form due to the fact that the letters are traced directly on the stone, this goes back at least as far as Gavarni, and sometimes, as in Chéret's *Le Petit Faust* of 1869 or his *Spectacle de l'Horloge* of 1876 is evolved into a conscious principle of style to fit the freedom of the rest of the drawing; finally there is the influence of Japanese lettering as seen in the work of Félix Regamey, Ibels, and others. A significant part of any definition of this aspect of *art nouveau* would be to determine the basis upon which these streams merge (fig. 1).



FIG. 8. — E. GRASSET. — Poster for an exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in London, ca 1895.

causes them to break out from the surface of the composition. This is no doubt good advertising, but it destroys the pictorial totality of Chéret's conception, and it is one of the great differences in quality between his posters and those of his contemporaries.

Just before 1890 Chéret's style goes through certain further changes. Before 1888 his work is consistently in three colors. (*Tivoli-Wauxhall* of 1872 is an exception.) But from this time on, four-color work is the rule, and certain posters, for example, *Jardin de Paris* of 1890, are done in five colors, produced, of course, by only four stones. At about this same time also, Chéret adopts a system of mixed textures that remains characteristic of his style. By substituting lithographic ink for crayon, and by applying it either smooth and flat with a brush, or dotted and sprayed

(as with the end of a tooth-brush), and by combining and mixing these techniques and the areas in which they are applied, Chéret varies his backgrounds and changes the quality of his colors. *Aux Buttes Chaumont* of 1889 (fig. 5) gives us an example of this new method, and of how Chéret uses it to produce jagged outlines that tie in with the irregular outlines of his figures. The *Musée Grévin* of 1891 (fig. 6) carries this procedure even further, extending it to the drawing of the figures; thus parts of the figure are defined simply by the jagged ending and juxtaposition of brushed in color areas, while other parts are rendered by a contrasting smooth contour. At the same time the new high format and large size of these two posters (about seven and one half feet, a size perhaps made possible only at this date by recent mechanical improvements) is a characteristic feature of the style of the period¹⁶. It is a style of bril-

16. There is no agreement among different authors as to the date at which it was possible to use large lithographic stones, as to the origin of these stones, or even as to their size. A. M. VILLON, *Dessinateur et Imprimeur Lithographe*, Paris, 1922 (but written in the nineties), says that the largest stones (two meters by a meter and a half) were not those of Bavaria, but came from Avèze (Gard) and Chateauroux (Indre), but does not say when these were first cut. SPONSEL, *op. cit.* (p. 21) quotes Chéret as saying that his favorite format was a stone m: 2, 80 by 40, 80 and suggests that these were introduced from London at the end of the seventies. (England, however, got most of its stones from Bavaria.) MAINDRON, *op. cit.*, 1884, p. 543, says that invention of machines "permettant l'emploi des pierres lithographiques de grandes dimensions" goes back to the beginning of 1866, the year of Chéret's return to France. But in MAINDRON's own catalogue the largest size poster of two and a half meters appears only about 1890, suggesting this at the date for the perfection of the mechanical means.



FIG. 9. — P. BONNARD. — Poster for "France-Champagne", 1889?

liant technical virtuosity which almost seems to push too far the perfectly controlled refinements of lithographic printing. It is also, however, a style necessitating greater care and greater expense in its production, and in view of this, and of the date of its appearance, we may justifiably ask whether some of its search for astonishing effects may not be due to the emergence at this time of a group of younger rivals of the poster art. In spite of his unrivalled position (in the course of his career he produced some 900 posters), Chéret may have been impelled toward his final, and logical, version of his art by the appearance on the market, and by the styles, of such men as Grasset, Bonnard, and Lautrec.

Of these three poster artists, the one who is today the least remembered had the greatest contemporary success. Eugene Grasset was much more than a designer of posters, but he carried that decorative style of which he was the partial inventor, and which was known by his name, into his poster work. His first production in this style was the interior done for the printer Charles Gillot just before and after 1880; his first posters were executed five years later¹⁷. Grasset's style was formed in part under the influence of English Arts and Crafts, but long before that he had been impressed by the illustrations of Gustave Doré; in the seventies he had familiarized himself with Japanese prints, and later found an affinity in the writing of such men as E. T. A. Hoffmann, Edgar Allen Poe, and Villiers de l'Isle Adam. *Les Fêtes de Paris* of 1886 (fig. 7) shows a preponderant medievalizing influence. The lettering here is not done by hand upon the stone, but is reversed in a special portion to be printed. The rest of the poster shows Grasset using his linear, waving manner to unite a realism and wealth of detail into a continuous picture surface. The same style is to be found in his *Jeanne d'Arc*, done for Sarah Bernhardt before 1890, in which the irregular, diagonal, multicolored bands of the sky blend with the dress patterns of the figure and the pointed shapes of the medievalizing lettering to produce a unified all-over pattern. This is still more or less the style of *Encre Marquet* of 1892, but in the posters of the mid-nineties, one for an exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in London (fig. 8), the other for his own

17. See: OCTAVE UZANNE, *Eugene Grasset and Decorative Art in France*, in: "The Studio", IV, Nov., 1894, pp. 37-47; and GABRIEL MOUREY, *Eugène Grasset*, in "Art et Décoration", VII, 1903, pp. 1-24.

exhibition at the *Salon des Cent*, Grasset's style is more obviously akin to the English movement. Both posters are marked by heavy, flowing contours that continue from figure to background, as do the colors and the color areas, and in both there is an increased sense of unified pictorial surface. It is significant that the horizontal yellow, blue, and purple bands of the *Grafton Galleries'* landscape, bands parallel to the picture plane and serving both as suggestions of perspective and as part of the flat decorative pattern, are reminiscent of the way the Gauguin of Pont-Aven constructed his landscape backgrounds out of colored strips meant to serve the same double purpose.

It is not our intention here to analyze or to summarize the lithographic posters of Bonnard and Toulouse-Lautrec. They are too well known to need such a review. But the picture of the background of the lithographic revival of the last decade of the century, and our discussion of some of its causes, would not be complete without the mention of one or two facts concerning their activity. The most significant of these is perhaps that the first color lithographs executed by each of the two artists were posters: for Bonnard, *France-Champagne* (1889?) (fig. 9); for Lautrec, *Moulin Rouge — La Goulue* (1891)¹⁸. Bonnard's is among the first works of his career, done to make some money, and it would seem to have been he who



FIG. 10. — P. BONNARD. — Poster for the "Revue Blanche", 1894.

introduced Lautrec to the process. This fact must be taken in conjunction with the definite precedence of the commercial posters of Chéret and Grasset over any "artistic" work on their part or the part of anyone else, and the technical progress we have described that made these posters possible. We must add to this the reminiscence of Chéret's style that *France-Champagne* contains, for all its personal touch, and that becomes clear if we compare it with Bonnard's subsequent posters, as for

18. See: CHARLES TERRASSE, *Bonnard*, Paris, n.d.; and DELTEIL, *Peintre-Graveur*, Vols. X-XI. For the date of *France-Champagne* we are following that given by TERRASSE in his text rather than of JEAN FLOURY in his catalogue appendix to the same book. There is confusion concerning this date because of another *France-Champagne*, a cover, of 1891; this latter is reproduced in: LEON WERTH, *Bonnard*, Paris, n.d., plate 54. TERRASSE's description of the circumstances under which the poster was made would give credence to his dating. Even if it be dated 1891, it would still precede Lautrec.

instance, *La Revue Blanche* of 1894 (fig. 10). There is here, then, a situation which clearly indicates the influence of the commercial poster upon the revival of "artistic" color lithography, and points to the commercial developments of the eighties as the foundation of the artistic successes of the nineties and the renewed interest in work of smaller format and more intimate expression. And then, in retroactive fashion, the commercial poster is itself regarded as a work of art, and is pulled in limited editions *avant la lettre* for the connoisseur and collector.

There are, of course, other factors which make this progression and final turn about possible. Among these are the broadening of the impressionist technique by the first of the post-impressionists in the eighties, and the consequent interest in media which allowed only of striking effects, as Gauguin's interest in the wood-cut; the renewed interest in arts and crafts, which in part precedes and influences the poster, as we have seen, but of which the poster is also another manifestation; the interest in the interrelation of all the arts of which the poster, advertising as it did books, the theatre, and the music-hall, seems to be a symbol; and the sudden glory of the music-hall itself. But the chronology and the relationships that have been reviewed perhaps contain the answer to another question — why are the posters of this period so much more representative (and so from the historical point of view more significant) than any later work? The difference is not to be accounted for by their value as individual creations; taken as separate works, the posters of Carlu or Cassandre, for example, are equally successful. The answer lies in the fact that these later men are modifying and applying a style already developed in another realm, whereas in the eighties and nineties the poster is an integral part of the stylistic evolution. Thus these posters are an essential step in our understanding of *l'art nouveau*.



FIG. 11. — H. DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC. — Poster for V. Joze's *Reine de Joie*, 1892.

ROBERT J. GOLDWATER

A SELF-PORTRAIT BY PAUL GAUGUIN

FROM THE CHESTER DALE COLLECTION

THE *Self-Portrait* by Paul Gauguin from the Chester Dale Collection now on view at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. (fig. 1) has long been known as a work of great strength and originality of conception. The mask-like face



FIG. 1. — PAUL GAUGUIN, *Self-Portrait*. — Chester Dale Collection; on indefinite loan at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.

of swarthy complexion is placed against a background of brilliant red and yellow; the elongated head, the slanting eyes and the exaggeratedly aquiline nose all combine to emphasize the sardonic aspect of Gauguin's personality. A halo hovers above the head, and a branch of apples to the right adds a decorative note. Long flower stems arch across the foreground and between the fingers of the hand wriggles a small black snake. The picture is painted on a wood panel and is signed and dated: 1889. *P Go.*

This portrait has never received the attention it deserves. I should like to show here that it is not only a key document of Gauguin's stay in Brittany before he went to Tahiti, but that it also furnishes a valuable record of the aims of the Symbolist movement so important for the development of primitivist and expressive trends in XX century art.

In 1889 when Gauguin painted this picture, he was residing in the small seaside town of Le Pouldu in Brittany. He had moved there in October of that year to escape the growing hordes of tourists in Pont-Aven where he had been staying previously. Surrounded by a group of artist friends, he settled at the inn of Mlle. Marie Henry. His closest companion was the Dutchman, Meyer de Haan, who was both his pupil and his patron. De Haan had given up a flourishing bakery in Amsterdam to devote himself to painting. For a year Gauguin stayed at Le Pouldu, finding its peaceful seclusion ideal for undisturbed artistic creation. This proved to be a period of prolific activity. Not only painting, but also lithography, woodcarving and the making of pottery designs filled his days. Such was his industry that he seemed to have made a work of art out of everything he touched.

This was no purposeless activity. Gauguin and

his friends worked intensely to give form to deeply felt artistic theories. Gauguin himself was looked upon as the guiding spirit of the group who had abandoned Impressionist methods. They used color expressively, not to imitate natural appearances; and signs and symbols, usually of personal connotation, stood for ideas which were never represented by exact description. They came to be known as the Synthetists or Symbolists.

The most complete expression of their aims was to be found in the small living and dining room of Mlle. Henry's inn which was entirely transformed by Gauguin, de Haan, Sérusier, and Filiger. Here were the artistic results of a veritable fever of creation, both mystical and intellectual. The room became a shrine to their exalted artistic faith. The window panes were covered with painted scenes of Brittany. Wherever there was space, mottoes and sayings were written on the plaster walls. Drawings, lithographs and sketches on cardboard were scattered everywhere; two landscapes and a portrait of Marie Henry by Meyer de Haan filled one wall; a wooden bust of Meyer de Haan by Gauguin was placed over the mantel; little statuettes and pots stood on shelves nailed to the walls. Outside the room over the door appeared a canvas entitled *The Terrestrial Paradise*.

Prominent among this welter of objects were two portraits by Gauguin painted directly on the wooden doors of a massive cupboard, one a *Self-Portrait* and the other a *Portrait of Meyer de Haan*. The ceiling of the room was covered with a painting of a large bird and the head of a woman, surrounded by the inscription "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*"¹. Fortunately these two portraits are in this country and the ceiling motifs can be studied in a lithograph on zinc by Gauguin, where he repeated them in a design for a plate dated in the same year, 1889 (fig. 4)². The panel ground and tall dimensions (31¼ in. x 20¼ in.) as well as the date of the *Self-Portrait* in the Chester Dale Collection prove that it was once one of the cupboard doors. The *Portrait of Meyer de Haan* in the collection of Mr. and

Mrs. Q. A. Shaw McKean, Boston (fig. 2), is also on wood, has the same dimensions and bears the same form of the signature, *P Go*, and the same date (1889). It was, therefore, according to every indication, the painting on the other side door of the cupboard.

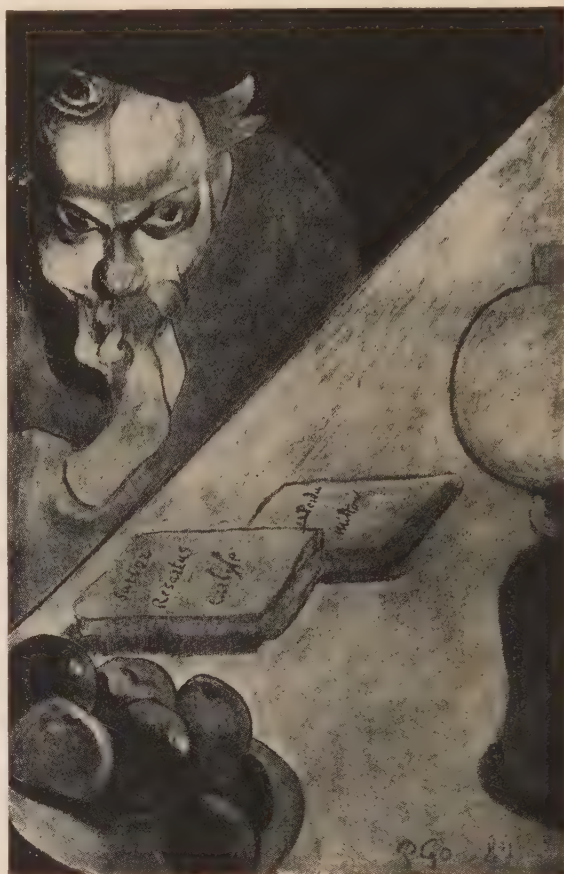


FIG. 2. — PAUL GAUGUIN, *Portrait of Meyer de Haan*. — Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Q. A. Shaw McKean, Boston. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, N. Y.

If we examine the three compositions for the symbolical elements, an underlying connection is evident. The halo in the *Self-Portrait* indicates that Gauguin represented himself satirically as Christ. Some of his fellow artists in Brittany had found in him an outward resemblance to the figure of the Messiah, suggested by his grave, imposing manner, his wearing of a moustache and short beard, and by his position as a leader of a group of disciples. Gauguin seized upon the idea, his ego no doubt flattered. But it also must have appealed to his basic cynicism. He was a man who continually sought out new

1. The description of the dining room is drawn from CHARLES CHASSE, *Gauguin et le groupe de Pont-Aven*, Paris, 1921.

2. This design is reproduced from: MARCEL GUERIN, *L'Oeuvre gravé de Gauguin*, Paris, 1927, pl. I. (Photograph courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., Edwin Perkins, photographer.) (Figure 1 is reproduced here through the same courtesy and is by the same photographer.)

physical pleasures, a sensuous and self-centered being whose whole personality was in fact the antithesis of Christ. Other paintings of this period repeat the concept, notably the *Christ on the Mount of Olives* in which the face of Christ is Gauguin's own. He intensified in this *Self-Portrait* his diabolic aspect and included the apples and snake, the symbols of man's original sin, to bring out the full irony of the comparison.

Gauguin referred to himself again in the ceiling picture. Guérin³ described the subject as a goose pecking at the hair of Mlle. Henry. The bird is not a goose, but a swan, Gauguin's personal emblem⁴. The charming feminine profile bears little resemblance to the mature and heavy features of Mlle. Henry in Gauguin's portrait of her (fig. 3) in the



FIG. 3. — PAUL GAUGUIN, *Portrait of Mlle. Marie Henry*. — Chester Dale Collection, New York, N. Y. Courtesy of the owner.

3. MARCEL GUÉRIN, *L'Oeuvre gravé de Gauguin*, Paris, 1927, pl. I. The print in Guérin's book is backward, Gauguin evidently not having bothered to reverse the design on the plate. It is printed here the right way around in order to make the inscription readable.

4. ROBERT BURNETT, *The Life of Paul Gauguin*, New York, 1937, p. 96.

Chester Dale Collection⁵. It is much more likely that the turned-up nose and dark eyes are those of Gauguin's mistress at the time, a girl referred to in his letters as Juliette. Was Gauguin thinking of the Jupiter and Leda myth? The presence of the two little birds, conceivably baby swans, adds support to this idea. The snake, traditional symbol of evil, was repeated again. Gauguin's own attitude, however, is revealed in the familiar motto, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*"⁶, (the first word written by Gauguin: "homis").

The *Portrait of Meyer de Haan* represents him crouched behind a table, his chin resting on his hand, his domed forehead illuminated by the glow of a lamp. A plate of apples appears on the table. His features as well as Gauguin's are given an unearthly cast. (Compare the picture of 1902 entitled *Contes Barbares* in the Folkwang Museum, Essen, where a strange woodland gnome has the face of de Haan.) The little Dutchman was described by his contemporaries as bent and dwarf-like, with reddish hair and a sly glance. He read a great deal and was fond of discussing philosophy with his friends. Two books are introduced in the portrait, their titles no doubt chosen with intent. Carlyle's "*Sartor Resartus*" conveys the view that the world is primarily psychic; and furthermore a whole chapter is devoted to a discussion of the value and effectiveness of symbols. The second book, Milton's *Paradise Lost* of which the following are the opening lines, also proves to be highly appropriate:

"Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe
With loss of Eden until one greater man
Restore us . . ."

Gauguin spent his whole life hunting for a lost paradise which he hoped to find first in France and

5. The *Portrait of a Woman* by Gauguin in the Chicago Art Institute called a likeness of Marie Henry does not seem to be the same person as represented in the Dale portrait.

6. ROBERT REY (in the "Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français," 1926, p. 37), states that in the summer of 1925 three paintings were discovered in the dining room of Le Pouldu, one being an overdoor depicting a swan with floral motifs. Is this a second version of the swan or is the writer referring to the composition discussed here and described by CHASSE as a painting directly on the plaster of the ceiling?

later in the South Seas. The painting called *The Terrestrial Paradise* in the inn was one concrete illustration of this search. The quiet town of Le Pouldu was an escape from the irritations of the material world where he would be left in peace to create according to his own ideals. Le Pouldu has thus been considered his first Tahiti.

The personal style that Gauguin evolved in Brittany is well exemplified in the three works from the dining room. The strong contrasts of flat color, the scattering of the symbols decoratively over the picture area, the arbitrary use of perspective, the dis-

tortion for emphasis, the bold outlines and tendency to caricature are evident in all of them. A primitivist approach was, therefore, well developed before Gauguin went to Tahiti, and he carried it with him on his first visit in 1891. He merely substituted South Sea Island for Breton themes.

A striking testimonial of this new and vital creative power is seen in the *Self-Portrait* which today, over fifty years later, still evokes the intense spirit of the dining room of Le Pouldu, the inner temple of Symbolism.

KATRINA VAN HOOK.



FIG. 4. — PAUL GAUGUIN, *Design for a plate.*

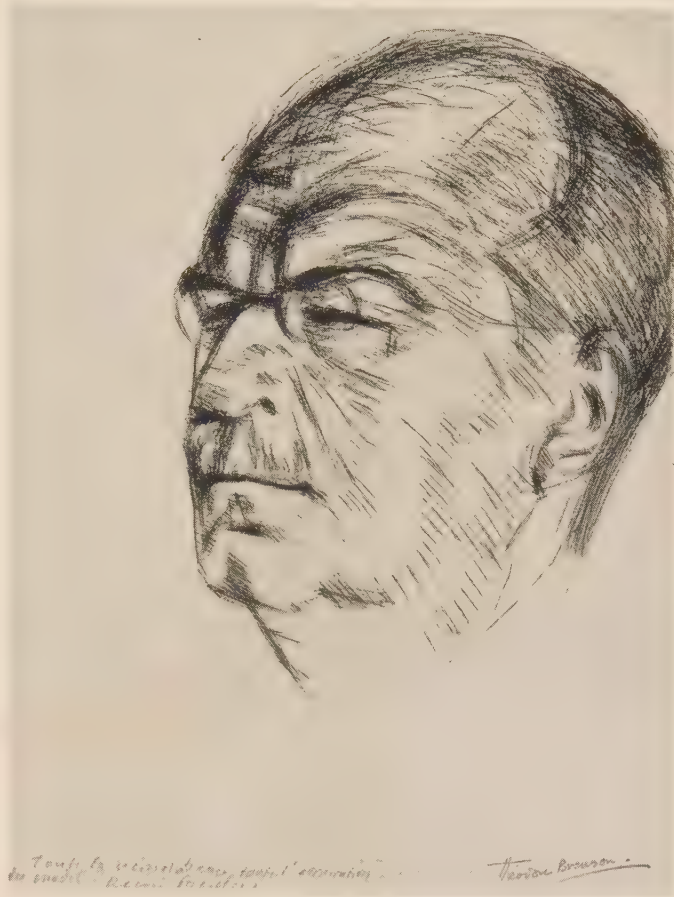
B I B L I O G R A P H Y

HENRI FOCILLON. *The Life of Forms in Art*. (Translated by CHARLES BEECHER HOGAN and GEORGE KUBLER.) New Haven, Yale University Press, 1942, 11 x 8, VIII, 76 p., ill. (Yale Historical Publications, LEONARD WOODS LABAREE, Editor, *History or Art IV*.)

"*The Life of Forms in Art*", as the translators state, "was originally published in Paris in 1934. Since then there has been another French edition, and translations into Czech and Danish, although the latter exists only in manuscript. The present text is the first to appear in English".

Prior to the war, the distinguished author of this book came at regular two year intervals to teach at Yale University. Among his former students are numbered men who hold distinguished posts in art centers throughout the country. Due to present conditions he has been here a longer time and a serious illness has caused him to remain in New Haven rather than accomplish his task as a missionary of Latin civilization and French thought and science throughout the entire western hemisphere. Such circumstances have served the English translation of his book in permitting his personal assistance as well as that of Madame Focillon whose "idiomatic knowledge of English has stood more than one thorny passage of the French in good stead", as the able translators observe. These gentlemen are happily chosen from among the author's own disciples (as this review's writer is also proud to rank herself). Hence without the slightest disrespect toward the original text, the English version becomes more than a translation; it amounts to an interpretation, perhaps even a clarification, though not in any sense a popularization of the first edition.

It would be out of place for us to praise the author, who is one of the "Gazette's" oldest patrons and one who rendered greatest assistance toward its revival in this country; nor need we pay tribute to the appearance of this work since this was adequately done in 1934. We do wish, however, to stress once again for all who are not acquainted with the French text and to all English readers the value which we attach to *The Life of Forms in Art* for those groping their way through the tangled approach to the human



THEODORE BRENSON. — Portrait of Professor Henri Focillon. — Engraving.

world's mystery. We also take this occasion to confess our personal reaction to the book and to confess the great debt we owe to the author — to the historian, philosopher, poet and writer each completely and strongly manifest in the tremendous personality of Professor Henri Focillon.

Obviously our personal reaction can scarcely be stated when more than eight years have elapsed since the appearance of the book which must be considered as an event in the field of our studies. The greatest discoveries always appear at the time of their disclosure as though we had always known them and, indeed, afterward we can scarcely imagine a world in which they had been ignored. But in an attempt to be sincere we look back to our student years confronted with the masterpieces of art, books of art historians, studying problems of art. What is

artistic creation? What laws must the creative artist obey? How does he achieve the harmony which elevates his creation to the dignity of art, of a masterpiece? What are the spiritual and technical elements of this harmony? What roads must be followed to reach it: roads through the interior spiritual world of the artist, and through the exterior world which comprises the infinite world in which he lives and the precisely determined world of, for instance, a canvas or panel if he is a painter, stone or wood if he is a sculptor, stone and architecture if he happens to be a sculptor in charge of a cathedral's decoration? How does the artist react to the conditions of the exterior world, strictly dominated by limitations of space and matter, subordinated to the laws of passing time which, in the course of history is constantly in opposition against the present moment and the new birth occurring at the present moment in spite of the fact that both of these further the course of history though they make their appearance as enemies and intruders?

All such questions were subconsciously in our mind before the appearance of *The Life of Forms in Art*. Not only to have them answered, but even to have them clearly stated we had to await this book. Here we see the whole world of a being whose very existence Professor Focillon has discovered and crystallized — this peculiar being which is the Form in Art. We see its life as it begins to appear in the creator's mind and later as it evolves under his creative process, controlled by material conditions and the implements of his process. We realize how it grows by itself and directs the artist's brush, chisel or pencil through the many nuances of the laws of rhythm and light within the frame of a particular geometric space. We understand also when it is born and thus determined, its particular position within the realm of time after having followed its development in the realm of space, matter and mind.

To present such an illuminating analysis of the fundamental problems which are constantly raised by research in art and study of beauty, recognized as the utmost accomplishment of the artistic genius, the author of this book would have to be, as we have already stated, an historian, writer, philosopher and poet.

We feel, in his work, the authority of a mind which embraces the intellectual output of the world in its entirety.

To the empiristic poetry of his artistic interpretation is brought the richness of the true philosopher's

mind—lacking in a Baudelaire; also to his thinker's point of view before the same interpretation is added the experimental reaction of an art lover toward the creations of art — so sorely missed in the philosophy of a Kant. On the other hand, we also find all the precise and even pedantic knowledge of the historian combined with the author's literary skill.

We recognize here the historian who had already considered art from the point of view of the history of forms in such a work as *L'Art des Sculpteurs romains*, stated in the sub-title: *Recherches sur l'histoire des formes*. The doctrine implied in all his works and teachings — at the Sorbonne, Yale, the College de France and throughout the world — that of respect for the facts and figures of history combined with a consideration of the conditions of artistic creation — finds its best expression in the *Life of Forms in Art*. The thesis, *La stylistique ornementale dans l'art Roman*, presented for doctorate by his disciple Jurgis Baltrusaitis, is one of the best practical applications of his doctrine.

Focillon the historian is too widely known to be dealt with here, but Focillon the writer whose style has enhanced the merit of the original edition with that charm peculiar to all of his books and which carries through the translation in a purified expression of his literary skill, has not been sufficiently praised. As a writer, in this book Professor Focillon proves himself to be an artist; as such he may be considered a perfect illustration of his own thesis. These *Forms in Art*, in his creation, are represented by words, punctuation — so important in French, the balance of the sentence, the contrasts of the masses and the hollows which he makes through the balance of sound, the rhythm of the whole written, spoken or demonstrated. Perhaps no literary artist has succeeded so well in the mastery of the morphology of that art, of this vocabulary which, throughout his entire life he has sought to read — and to teach us to read — on the monuments of painting, sculpture and architecture. Moreover, the author of the *Life of Forms in Art*, just as the artists dealt with in its pages, remains ever conscious of the limited geometric frame within which all this morphology is bound to move, subject to the arguing thematical demonstration.

Thus this work of a great writer and a poet deserves to be guarded in all libraries, on the shelves with the best books in the history of art.

ASSIA R. VISSON.

CONTENTS

VI SERIES—VOLUME XXII

(October - December 1942)

MRS. ELIZABETH PIERCE-BLEGEN	Recent discoveries on Roman and Greek art	63
W. G. CONSTABLE	Gaspare Negro of Venice	1
JAMES B. FORD	Conrad Wise Chapman's <i>Valley of Mexico</i>	53
WALTER FRIEDLAENDER	Iconographical Studies on Poussin's works in American public collections. I. — The Northampton <i>Venus and Adonis</i> and the Boston <i>Venus and Mars</i> . .	17
CURT GLASER	Fra Angelico's Louvre <i>Coronation of the Virgin</i>	149
ROBERT J. GOLDWATER	"L'Affiche Moderne", a revival of poster art after 1880	173
KATRINA VAN HOOK	A <i>Self-Portrait</i> by Paul Gauguin from the Chester Dale Collection	183
FISKE KIMBALL	J.-A. Messonnier and the beginning of the "Genre Pittoresque"	27
OLGA KOSELEFF	Representations of the Months and Zodi- acal signs in <i>Queen Mary's Psalter</i> . .	77
FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.	A Titian problem: <i>The Seven Acts of Mercy</i>	165
CHANDLER RATHFON POST	A Second Retable by Jan Joest in Spain .	127
JOHN REWALD	Camille Pissarro in the West Indies . .	57
MARVIN CHAUNCEY ROSS	A Golden Vase by I. Ador	122
CHARLES SEYMOUR, JR.	Versailles' Fountains, two sculptures from the Théâtre d'Eau in America . . .	41
ROBERT C. SMITH	XIX Century painting in Argentina . .	99
CHARLES STERLING	Two XV Century Provençal Painters re- vived: I. — Nicolas Dipre II. — The "Master of St. Sebas- tian" (Josse Lieferinxe?)	9 135

HANS TIETZE AND MRS. E. TIETZE-CONRAT	On several drawings erroneously attributed to Titian	115
LIONELLO VENTURI	The Idea of the Renaissance	89

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

<i>Chilean Contemporary Art Exhibition</i> (Toledo, Ohio) (A.R.V.)	125
HENRI FOCILLON. — <i>The Life of Forms in Art</i> (A.R.V.)	187
CHARLES RUFUS MOREY. — <i>Early Christian Art</i> (Walter W. S. Cook)	61
REYNALDO DOS SANTOS. — <i>Conferencias de Arte</i> (A.R.V.)	125

REVIEW OF REVIEWS:

The Art Bulletin (June 1942)	126
Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Summer 1942)	62
Bulletin of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Handbook)	126
The Burlington Magazine (July 1942)	62
Message (January 1942)	62
The Studio (June 1942)	126

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CHANDLER RATHFON POST, who received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1909 and had previously been a student at the American School in Athens in 1904-1905, has been a member of the faculty of Harvard University since 1905, having been there successively assistant, associate and full professor of Greek and the fine arts from 1912 to 1934 and Boardman professor of the fine arts since 1934. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he is the author of numerous notable works in the field of the arts: *Medieval Spanish Allegory* (1915); *A History of European and American Sculpture* (1921); *A History of Sculpture* (with GEORGE H. CHASE) (1924). His most important and renowned work is his *History of Spanish Painting*, of which eight volumes have appeared between 1930 and 1941. His present study on *A Second Retable by Jan Joest in Spain*, which appears in this issue page 127 adds to the knowledge of Spanish painting, to which school this eclectic Flemish artist would seem to belong.

CHARLES STERLING, recently appointed to work in the Department of Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was previously in charge of the same work at the Louvre. His publications on French XVII century and Primitive Painting have ranked him among the distinguished young art historians produced by the Sorbonne. He was there a faithful disciple of Professor Henri Focillon who, as President of the Ecole libre des Hautes Etudes of New York, has awarded him a professorship in the history of art in this recently established Franco-American scientific institution. He has done valuable research on many obscure or ignored painters. His latest revivals are *Two XV century Provençal Painters* who are studied in the two articles he now publishes in the "Gazette", the first of which on *Nicolas Dipre* appeared in our October 1942 issue (pp. 9 to 16) and the second on "*The Master of St. Sebastian*" (*Josse Lieferinxe?*) is published in the present issue page 135

CURT GLASER was a student of the History of Fine Arts in Berlin, Munich and Vienna. His first published work appeared in 1907: a biography of *Hans Holbein the elder*. His work on German painting of the XV and XVI centuries, *Die Altdutsche Malerei*, appeared in 1924. He then published some works on Far-Eastern art. From 1912 to 1933 he was assistant director of the Print Room of the Berlin Museum. His other published works are: *The Gothic wood cuts of Lucas Cranach* (1923); the Norwegian painter *Edvard Munch* (1917); *Vincent van Gogh* (1921); *Paul Cézanne* (1922), etc. After leaving Germany, Dr. Glaser spent most of the following years in Italy. His article on *Fra Angelico's Louvre "Coronation of the Virgin"* page 149 results from his latest research and critical study in this country.

FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR., professor emeritus of art and archeology of Princeton University, member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1892 and was also a student of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes at the Sorbonne. His work as art critic and art editor has been outstanding and he has published distinguished works in the field of the history of art and aesthetics: *Estimates in Art* (series I in 1916, series II in 1931); *A History of Italian Painting* (1923); *Modern Painting* (1927); *The American Spirit in Art* (1927); *Venetian Painters* (1936); *Western European Painting of the Renaissance* (1939). This research more than qualifies him for his present discussion, *A Titian problem: "The Seven Acts of Mercy"* page 165 a problem raised by a set of engravings which he has recently discovered and acquired.

ROBERT J. GOLDWATER, A.B., Columbia University (1929), M.A., Harvard (1931) and Ph.D., New York University (1937), taught at Dartmouth (1929-1930) and has been a lecturer on art at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, since 1934 and assistant professor of art at Queens College, New York, since 1939; he has also been a lecturer at the Art Institute of Chicago, Vassar College and the Art Students' League. Numerous short studies on modern art have been published by him (Cézanne, Gauguin, Picasso and Seurat) as well as a book on *Primitivism in Modern Painting* (1938). He has studied and travelled abroad with Paris his special center. His survey of one of the most fascinating aspects of the French "1900" which appears anew in his article: "*L'Affiche Moderne, a revival of poster art after 1880*" page 173 bears added testimony to his predilection for study of French culture and of modern French art in particular.

MISS KATRINA VAN HOOK, a graduate of Smith College (B.A., 1933) and of Radcliffe College (M.A., 1934), received a Carnegie Summer Fellowship, and was a student of the Universities of Paris (1935), Munich and Berlin (1935-1936). She was a reader in the art department of Bryn Mawr College (1935-1938), an instructor in the art department of Smith College (1938-1940) and in the art department of Goucher College in Baltimore (1941). In 1941 she was appointed as Senior Museum Aide to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., where the "*Self-Portrait*" by *Paul Gauguin from the Chester Dale Collection*, about which she writes in this issue, page 183 is now on view on indefinite loan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY page 187 in this issue has been prepared by MRS. ASSIA R. VISSON who has been associated with the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" since 1930. A graduate of the Sorbonne and the Paris Institute of Arts and Archeology, her field of special study was folk art and Russian icons. Disciple of Professor Henri Focillon, she reviews here his book: *The Life of Forms in Art*.